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WHAT GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER

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BY THE REVEREND
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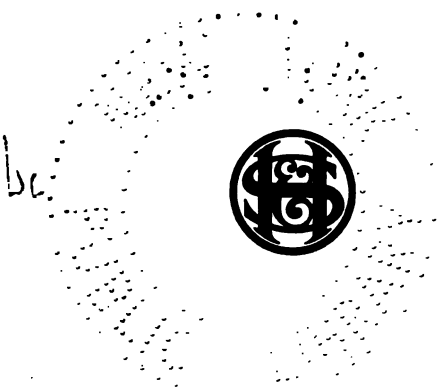

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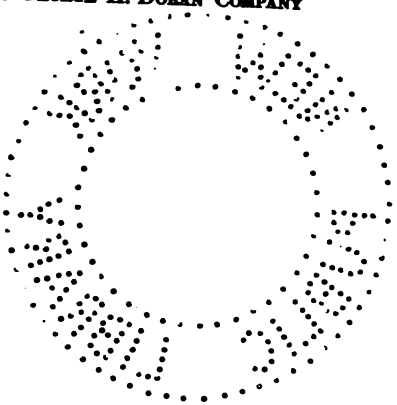

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TO MY WIFE

Who has taught me that God has joined together in this world a good many other things besides husband and wife.

OCT 1 1939

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SEED AND HARVEST

SEED AND HARVEST

CHAPTER I

SEED AND HARVEST

"What God hath joined together let not man put asunder."—Mark 10:9.

THE Master, in these words, is speaking of the marriage tie. It is this to which the passage refers. This is His interpretation of the union betwixt husband and wife: it is a life-union; it is to be severed by only two things—adultery and death. "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

But as Charles Wagner has pointed out to us, it is *what* God hath joined. The pronoun is neuter, not masculine or feminine. And the thought arises in our minds if there was not possibly a general law referred to in this summing up of the great Teacher. Are there not other things besides husband and wife that God hath joined together? It may not be an altogether fruitless enterprise if, with this

search in view, we go forth to observe the methods of the divine workings, and note what things the Creator evidently meant to be for ever, in some close, inseparable touch, linked together.

I. And let us note, first of all, the Seed and the Harvest. God hath joined these together. We cannot divorce them without doing violence to the natural order. We reap what we sow. All admit that as we deal with nature so she will deal with us. If we treat nature right, she will treat us right. If we play her false, she will play us false. If we do her a wrong, she will not overcome evil with good and do us a favour. There is no Christianity in nature. Nature is pagan: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. No amount of labour can make tares yield wheat. If a building is well and faithfully erected, gravity is its friend, but if crookedness enters into the walls, she is its sworn enemy. He who plays tricks with gravity will get the worst of it. Granted nature's major and minor premises, and we cannot dodge her conclusion. They are linked together with hooks of steel. No

bribery can induce fire to alter its action. The law of cohesion cannot be intimidated. It is as impossible to cheat nature as to make a rope of sand. We must not accuse nature of cruelty when we admit her uniformity. A world in which water would only drown or boil on Sundays would not be a reasonable world. If water only boiled on Sundays, it would not cook our dinners for us on Mondays. The verdict of fire and water must be invariable.

How strange that men should imagine that it were possible to sow disease and reap health, or to scatter the grains of folly and have a rich crop of wisdom in the autumn. But the law of the harvest is inflexible. The fruit belongs to the tree. What we weave in our youth we wear in our age. Out on the shores of Lake Michigan last summer a man killed another and threw his mangled body into the lake. The third day the tides swept the body up on the shore, not one hundred yards from the criminal's cabin. And the guilty man was so troubled that he hastened to confess his crime. Taken to the scene of the murder, he was heard to whisper: "Ah, the tides did it;

no use fighting against the tides." But the tides are God's laws. Richard Baxter once said: "How can acts and their consequences be disunited? If we do this, how can we escape that?" If we see smoke we know there is fire, but the smoke is not the cause of the fire; the fire is the cause of the smoke. "He who puts a chain around the neck of a slave," says Emerson, "will find the other end fastening around his own." "No man can do wrong without suffering wrong." It is part of the ironclad nature of things. "The wages of sin is death."

II. But take another dualism. Instance the mountain and the valley. Every mountain has its valley; every valley has its mountain, and the wealth of our world, as well as much of its interest and loveliness, comes largely from its unevenness. There are no rivers on the mountain top, nor are there any harvests to speak of, but then, neither is there any gold or silver in the valleys. Jesus was fond of the mountains. Nearly every great event in His life is coupled with a hill or a mountain.

And the irregularities of earth are strangely paralleled in human life. For here too we have rise and fall; here too we have heights and hollows; here too we have upper and under. And the great sociological debate to-day is really a discussion as to the best method of flattening and evening the mass. Socialism, like the waves of the sea, is seeking a level. We are in a world abundantly supplied, only the supplies are poorly distributed. And how to remedy the favouritism is the puzzling problem. It is at the heart of the great tariff debate. Some men have such a genius for amassing, and some for dispersing, that it would seem at times as if communism must be an impossible ideal as long as human nature is what it is.

And then again another question arises, and a very important question, viz., this: Are we built for dead levels? As long as some are born with ten talents and some with one, will there not be lowlands and highlands? God certainly does not want us all to be poor, and there is a grave doubt as to whether He wants us all to be rich, for it is a simple fact that

many of us haven't hearts strong enough to stand the ozone of the summit. We speak much of equality and liberty. We have drafted the words into our Constitution. And if you go to Paris, you will see them carved on almost every building. You will find them even on the Morgue. But really, when we stop to think about it seriously, it is only on the Morgue that they are perfectly appropriate. For there are no dead levels in life save in this realm of dust and silence. As Mrs. Browning puts it, "The spade of the sexton pats us all even."

The world to-day is in a savage mood over this question of upper and under. We find it in capital and labour. They have never been farther apart. The chasm is as deep as a Rocky Mountain cañon. The cleavage is wide, too, and the threats thundered across the gorge are bitter and alarming.

And the dangerous classes are not all on the lower level—not by any means. They are found just as plentifully where Abraham Lincoln said they would be found—on the topmost seats of the mighty. The simple fact is

that the poor man has found out to his sorrow that he cannot safely trust himself to the generosity of his more fortunate brother. When men meet in secret council to fix the price of coal, and then to fix the wage, they are usurping a prerogative that does not belong to them. And when the workingman finds himself rated as a hand and belonging to an inferior condition, instead of as a brother and an immortal soul, we do not wonder that he is tempted sometimes to retaliate. Workingmen are telling us that if Jesus was on earth to-day he would fight their battles. He would, if they are righteous battles. He would unquestionably champion the cause of the poor man if the poor man is right, but He would just as certainly champion the cause of the rich man if the rich man is right. The social worker is short-sighted when he leaves out of his programme the spiritual, just as the church worker is equally blind who fails to see the economic injustices under which men are living. We must combine the evangelism which aims to regenerate the individual with the social service which seeks to improve his conditions. It

is perfectly possible to use both methods in the same field.

As students of the New Testament, we believe that the Christian solution of our human inequalities is a simple one. These inequalities always have existed and they always will, only the difference is on the surface; it is not deep down. In the sight of God we are all alike—we are all equally dear. "One is our Father and we are all brethren." I know some temperaments are like gunpowder and matches and are better separated, but that is part of the tragedy of sin. To Jesus, humanity is one great brotherhood. God hath joined together in this world high and low, rich and poor, strong and weak. In nature we have the oak and the elm and the redwood, but then we have also the lilac and the reed and the golden rod. There are needy little children all about us who need to be mothered, and there's many a poor fellow who needs badly to be brothered. He needs patience and kindness and the chance to live a real human life. None of us liveth to himself. We are all dependent on each other. We are all

"bound together in a bundle." The mountain should help the valley, sending its fertility down; the valley should help the mountain, sending its moisture up.

How beautifully Tennyson weaves this truth into his "Palace of Art"! A woman builds herself a mansion far from the noise of the toiling multitudes. She furnishes it with all the treasures of culture and then retires to enjoy her exquisite solitude. But only for three years did her dream of peace last. The loneliness becomes intolerable, and soon she prays for a humble cabin near the murmur of the busy world. The poem is true to life. God has made us for each other. He has married us to each other. We must have other lives to touch our own. In the Church, rich and poor should meet together. It is the Biblical arrangement. It was the Apostolic intention. If the Church of God is becoming aloof from the toiling millions, she is divorcing the divine order and she will pay the price. A church for the rich and another church for the poor is unscriptural, and more, it is mischievous. Something is the matter with that

church where the rich occupy the dress circle and the poor are pushed to the peanut gallery. Let us learn a valuable lesson from our Catholic friends across the way, whose great institution we are all too apt to criticise and condemn. They can teach us many a sound and much-needed lesson on Christian democracy, as well as on marriage and divorce.

We are living in a world where opposites are linked together. The two great forces centripetal and centrifugal are always pulling apart, but each is essential to our safety. If either were to prevail, there would be destruction and smash and ruin. It is by the even balance that we live. It is the duality of truth. "God hath joined them together, and what God hath joined together let not man put asunder." "There shall be abundance of corn in the earth," says the Psalmist, "upon the top of the mountains." Not a very favourable place for corn, surely! Corn asks for the warm rays of the valley, not the bleak, biting cold of the summit. But when Messiah comes, there will be saints even in Cæsar's household. And the prophet goes on to say further, "I

will open fountains in the valleys." "I will fill the valleys with thy height." "Every valley shall be exalted." "Wherefore, glorify God in the valleys." There are blessings in most unlikely places. Each contributes its part to the great virtuous whole.

III. But once more, take another coupling. Take the river and the bank. There can be no river without its corresponding banks. The bank is the vessel that indicates and holds and guides the river. Just as language is the boundary of thought, so the bank is the boundary of the stream. And each is necessary to the other. They cannot be dissociated. Take the bank away and the river becomes a marsh; take the river away and the bed becomes an arroyo.

And this is a symbol of life. Truth is double. As Emerson says, "An inevitable dualism bisects nature so that each thing is a half and suggests another thing to make it whole." "Every act integrates itself in a twofold manner." Every truth has two sides. Sometimes we hear people speak about a half truth, but there is no such thing as a half truth.

It is as foolish to speak about half a truth as to speak about half a falsehood. If I say of a man who is 6 feet tall that he is 3 feet tall, it is not half true: it is all false. The man is not 3 feet tall; he is 6 feet tall. If I say of a vessel that is gold on the outside and silver on the inside that it is a golden vessel, I am not speaking truly. It is not a golden vessel. All truth, let it be explained, has two sides. God has joined together in this world fire and smoke, the inside and the outside, spirit and matter, body and soul, the temporal and the eternal.

And we find this illustrated to-day in the things of the spirit. How many are clinging to the form of a creed without its substance. It is the bank without the river. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Others again are trying to hold on to the reality and letting the symbol go. They say they do not need to go to church any more; they can be good Christians without that aid. They do not need the help of a stated day of rest; all days are sacred. "What need of stained glass windows," they say, "to remind us of God when

through the glory of sunrise we can look out upon His throne?" They do not need, they claim, the help of sacraments and ordinances any more, or of rites and ceremonies. These things no longer bring them nearer to God. They have cast them aside as the healthy tree casts its leaves, to make room for a larger, richer life. They boast, in telling you, that they have let these crutches go. It is the river, is it not, declining any further need of the bank?

But is it a healthy sign? Can we do without all symbol? Jesus did not think so, if He is to be our teacher. Is it possible to abolish entirely the letter and retain the spirit? In heaven there will be no temple, but then, in heaven there is going to be no flesh and blood, and may it not be that flesh and blood need a temple? As we climb a ladder we step from rung to rung. When we reach the higher rung we can let the lower go. And when we gain the landing, we can discard the ladder altogether; but till then the topmost step is needful. When the river reaches the ocean it will not need the bank. And we are safe in abolish-

ing symbol only when we have graduated into some higher symbol. Symbols we all outgrow, or should; but as long as we are weak and human, we need some human help. Poor is the Christian whose symbol is the chief thing. And poor too is the Christian who is not daily learning to lean less and less upon it. No symbol is doing its perfect work unless it is enabling its votaries to gradually do without it. And the approach to spiritual perfection —I take it to be an approach to God and a real consciousness of God without the use of symbol. Use the letter, but use it as the letter. Beware of grasping it so tightly as to kill the spirit. The symbol is the embodiment of the spirit, and the body should be stalwart and vigorous. Not pale and thin and emaciated. No symbol is hurtful if it is the expression of a healthy life within. One does not object even to High Mass if it brings its devotees nearer to God.

IV. One more union we must mention ere we close. I refer to sunshine and shadow. There is no sunshine without its shadow, and there is no shadow without its corresponding

light. Shadow is the opposite of light, and yet it is the light that makes it. No shadow makes itself. A substance there must be somewhere, and a light. The shadow of a tree always means a tree not far away. And the soul, too, has its shadows. There is the bright and the dark in every life. I believe that things are more evenly distributed than they seem. Every sweet hath its bitter. Every end means another end. We cannot have the silver lining without the cloud. God hath joined them together.

Indeed, it has become a serious question with not a few, which predominates. People are asking every day: "Is human life a glad, or is it a gloomy thing?" And strange, is it not, that after all the centuries, there is still a difference of opinion? And I believe that one reason for this divergence is because it is both. Joy and sorrow are parts of the one same world. Indeed, they meet in bewildering union in the same heart. That is why the Bible is such a wonderful book. It is so full of joy and pain. Cardinal Newman has a sermon which he entitles, "Scripture, a record

of human sorrow," in which he points out that all the great saints from Abraham to the Man of Sorrows were given this potion by God. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward."

But God hath joined these things together, and what God has done must be for our good. All of us shrink from suffering. We would avoid it if we could. No one, if he had the power to choose his lot, would choose a lot of pain. But He who orders our steps has willed it otherwise, and so it must be for some wise, gracious end. And some of the blessings we can even now dimly outline. There is loss in the shadows of life, but there is also gain. There is bitterness, but there is blessing too. No one can stand the glare of constant brightness. His life would become dry and hard. He needs the cooling twilight and the rain. I am told that there is only one place where there are no rainbows—the great Sahara desert. It takes the clouds to give fertility and colour. When we suffer something is always lost, but when we suffer something, too, is always gained. If this were a world without

pain, it would not be nearly as kindly a world. God has set one thing over against another.

Here, then, is the message of the hour. We might go on to illustrate in other ways how comprehensive and far-reaching is our text. This law of two-ness is found in almost every field of action. There is sex in marriage, and parties in government, and centripetal and centrifugal in the great cosmic plan. Every result in nature seems to come by the joint action of two forces working apparently in opposition and yet each really contributing to the one composite and integral result. The world is full, and our lives are full, of things that God has joined together. There is the island and the ocean, the life and its environment. Or we might go on to speak of religion and righteousness, of truth and character, of faith and works. The great cardinal crime of history has been in putting things asunder that God has glued together. How prone we are, for instance, to divide up our tasks into sacred and secular! "Religion is religion and business is business," we say, and they are separate and distinct compartments.

But it is an unscriptural and dangerous divorce. There is not one holy day; there are seven holy days. There are not a few sacred places; every place is sacred. To say that Christianity has to do with the temple but not with the counting-room, is one of the most mischievous infidelities that ever disturbed the Church. A man's business is the divinely appointed place for the play of his Christian character. "No man can serve two masters." No man can be two-faced and at the same time be true. Religion and business God hath joined together. Let no short-sighted, narrow sectarian ever pull them apart. It is the supreme divorce of all. So let us learn to respect this great divine law of partnership in the spiritual order, and may it teach us the blessedness of acceptance and obedience and trust.

EVANGELISM AND PERSONALITY

CHAPTER II

EVANGELISM AND PERSONALITY

"Then shall each man have his praise from God."—I Cor. 4:5.

I WAS impressed the other day when reading the opening verses of this fourth chapter of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, and especially so when I came to that last clause of the fifth verse: "Then shall each man have his praise from God." So much of our church life is devoted to praising God, that we are apt to forget this complementary truth when the things of darkness are revealed: "Then shall each man have his praise from God."

Every Sabbath morning we begin our church service with a doxology of praise. "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow." We say: "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. Let us give unto the Lord the glory due unto

His name." "Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Zion. Unto Thee shall all flesh come." The Psalms are largely lyrics of praise. Sometimes in our public worship we speak of everything that antecedes the sermon as preliminaries, but this surely is not as it should be. Praise ought never to be a preliminary. Is it not really the supreme part of worship, and should it not be the most helpful part? I heard of a preacher once concerning whom it was said that every time he preached he made God great. His, I am quite sure, was a glorious ministry, because it was so largely a ministry of praise. Heaven, we are told, is going to be a life of endless praise. "They fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying: Amen; Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be unto our God for ever and ever." There they sing: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and wisdom and riches and strength and honour and glory and blessing."

But in the verse before us, it is the other side of praise that is exposed. "Then shall each

man have his praise from God." That is to say, there is coming a day when God will commend us. He is going to give us His plaudit of approval. And this plaudit is to be for our fidelity. "Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." And the thing that especially caught my eye about this wondrous panegyric is that it is going to be personal. "Then shall *each man* have his praise from God." The emphasis of the Gospel is always on personality. Open the Bible at random, and on well nigh every page is found the teaching that God cares for us personally. "Are not five sparrows sold for two pence and not one of them is forgotten before God?" God singles us out from the crowd and calls us each one. You recall that sweet saying in John, "He calleth His own sheep by name." We are not cogs in the wheel, nor chips on the stream, nor grains of sand in the bank. We are children, each one precious and dear to the Father. We are hearing much to-day about the enthusiasm for humanity. But we are nowhere told that Christ enthused over humanity. We are not even told that He

loved "humanity." He loved *men.* "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God"—over what? A city converted? A lost world coming home? These words are a perpetual wonder: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one sinner* that repenteth." That is not the "tyranny of numbers." It is not what has been called the "statistics of the crowd." It is the value and the preciousness of each individual human soul.

A great deal has been written during the past few years about the masses, although the word, I think, is not found in the Bible. The words the Bible uses are father, heir, son, daughter, child. "O Lord, Thou hast searched *me* and known *me.* Thou art acquainted with all *my* ways. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising." The unique and striking note of the Christian Evangel is its emphasis on the unit. "I am the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob." The love of God is not a vague, hazy influence wrapping us all in its impersonal embrace. There is no

aggregating. There is no plural effect. It is the tenderness that takes up in its arms "one of these little ones." Jesus spoke some of his deepest secrets when there was but a single listener. On the cross, his heart was touched by the pleading cry of one poor sufferer, and he a thief. Ours, by the way, is the only religion that represents the Infinite as standing at the door of every human heart and saying, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any many hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

"Like a mighty army moves the Church of God," we sing. Aye, and is that not the pity of it? An army is a great, solid, incorporate phalanx. It is a heartless corporation. Corporations, they are telling us, have no souls. The soldier is lost in the army. One of the perils of our commercial life is the peril of a suppressed personality, the swallowing up of the individual in the great sea of things. Some one calls it "the anonymousness of industry." The workman is nothing but a shuttle in the great mill.

"Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers,
And I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers
And the world is more and more."

But not thus is it with the marching forces of the Kingdom. There is no mass meeting effect here. God's approach to us is personal. His call is personal. His forgiveness is personal. His judgment will be personal. "Every man must give account of himself to God." His praise is going to be personal. "Then shall each man have his praise from God."

No matter how many thousand bricks go into the building, each brick is handled as if it were the only one. No matter how many kegs of nails are driven into the walls, each nail is driven one at a time. Every rib of steel in the structure is placed in its socket separately; every bolt is made red hot and riveted, as if the whole structure depended on that one bolt. The surgeon does not deal with hospitals in bulk. He operates one at a time. Each patient has his own diagnosis, his own treatment, his own chart, his own diet. It was never

the intention of the Master to save cities in blocks or wards or subdivisions. The plan of Jesus was not to minister to large groups, but to come in close touch with a few men who should breathe the spirit of His life. It is all very close and tender. "He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*." He laid aside the mantle of His imperial glory for *me*. "O love that will not let *me* go." Why, George Matheson would have spoiled that hymn if he had said, "O love that will not let *us* go." All great hymns are personal: "Nearer My God to Thee," "My Country 'Tis of Thee," "My Faith Looks Up to Thee." Plato taught that men were to lose themselves in the State, but Christ teaches that each soul is to stand out in its own separate entity. And this, let us note once more, is going to be the surprise of the Judgment. There is to be nothing wholesale about it, nothing lumpy. The one hundred forty-and-four thousand are not going to be ushered in as a solid brigade, and receive one grand, indiscriminate, resounding eulogy. The Judgment is going to be distinct, specific, singular and tenderly appreciative. There is going to

be a sweet intimacy. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me." "Then shall each man have his praise from God."

Now, is there not a great and far-reaching lesson here for us? To-day there is a drift toward what is corporate and collective. We read of Collective Humanity as the object of redemption. It is true that the expression, "Kingdom of God," is a Scriptural phrase, but is there the slightest warrant for using it in such a way that the individual is in danger of sinking and being merged in the mass? The Kingdom is simply the way to the King. We cannot touch Him except through it. There are not a few who feel that this is the great weakness of the Church Militant to-day, viz.: that we have so nearly lost the personal note. Individualism has been replaced by socialism and the community idea. And the results, we must confess, have not been encouraging—at least not religiously. For one thing, responsibility has been weakened. The *vox populi* is very often unsafe, because it makes for a sort

joint-stock consciousness. Nicodemus
l: "We know that thou art a teacher come
m God," but it would have been a good deal
re significant, would it not, if Nicodemus
l said, "I know." Masses of men will do
at no individual in the mass would for a
ment dream of doing. The employer who
ows his business to be run by the crowd is
gotiating with disaster.

Look at the New Testament. The stories
the New Testament are nearly all individ-
—the woman of Samaria, the eunuch in his
riage, Cornelius in his chamber. Above all,
ıl of Tarsus stands out pre-eminently. "I
crucified with Christ," he says. "In me
elleth no good thing." "Christ liveth in
." "I can do all things in Him." Preach-
in the New Testament is largely a collo-
al matter. No doubt our pulpit work does
ıe good. Some one has compared it to dash-
a lot of water over a collection of empty
tles. Some will dribble in. But the most
ıd is done when the speaker steps down to
after-service and talks to men one by one.
Take the resurrection appearances. They

are almost all definitely personal. There is an appearance to Peter with a message intended primarily for Peter; an appearance to Mary with a personal greeting for Mary. All through the Scriptures, contact with God is a personal matter. Some one calls the first chapter of John the "Finders' Chapter." John found Jesus, Jesus found Philip, Philip found Nathaniel and Andrew found Peter. No sooner had Andrew found the Messiah than he made known the great discovery to his brother. That is how the Christian Church started: just two men, each going out to find his brother. Two and two make four. And so it has been all the way down, through all the years succeeding. Men are brought to Christ by other men. That is what Paul conceived as the superlative glory of his life. He was the connecting link between the Shepherd seeking His own and His own. "I sought for a man," says Ezekiel. This has always been God's search. "Adam, where art thou?" "When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." The great work of the life of Jesus, what was it? Was it preaching? Was it

teaching? Was it working miracles? No! The great work of Jesus Christ was finding men, fitting men, calling men, training men. He did not attempt to convert the world, nor even Palestine. His supreme task was in putting his stamp upon a little group of twelve humble toilers.

A few years ago a little book was published entitled: "Winning Men One by One." The title is certainly Scriptural. It is the divine way, and many are coming to the conclusion that it is the only way. It is a very old truth, but it is another of those forgotten secrets that we are in grave danger of losing altogether. But every revival of apostolic zeal has seemed to discover it afresh. In gunpowder it is a law that the finer the grain the greater the dynamic. And the smaller our audience the more effective is likely to be our appeal. Henry Ward Beecher once said: "The longer I live the more confidence I am coming to have in those sermons where one man is the minister and one the congregation, and there is no doubt as to who is meant." No gardener would dream of treating a violet in the same

way as a nasturtium. Some flowers flourish in the sunshine, some in the shade; some in damp soil, some in dry. Plants differ in their nature. And so do men. Like the great Apostle, we are to strive to find out each other's idiosyncrasies. Paul wrote: "Unto the Jews became I a Jew that I might gain the Jews. I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some." We are the wire for the transmission of the current. God's pathway to one heart is through another heart. It is the private soldier that wins the battle. Alas, the trouble with us to-day is that we are so eternally busy doing things that we have no time to go out and look for men.

When we walk out into the great world of nature we see the mountains. They are grand, sublime, awful, sovereign, seemingly eternal. But the scientist, as a rule, is not on the hunt for mountains. His eye is on the lookout for pebbles, flowers, bugs, butterflies. He prefers to roam about in the dim realm of the minute. It is the little things that attract his interest. Anybody can see a mountain, but it takes a keen eye to see a butterfly. I was in a

laboratory the other day, and the scientist was showing us a bit of radium. It was so small, he said, that it could easily go through the eye of a needle. Then he put it under his field glass, and how it scintillated and sparkled! One could almost believe that it was of rock-like dimensions. So let us not despise the dignity of the diminutive. For when we see it in its proper light it is great; it is beautiful.

We have all heard of Kitto. His books are in our libraries—he was perhaps "the most prolific of all Bible illustrators." He died a young man—only forty-nine—with his name as the author of almost as many books. He was a Doctor of Divinity, although a layman. In the whole range of religious biography there is hardly a parallel. His life reads like a romance—he was born in a drunkard's home, in poverty and hunger—a little pinched, deaf pauper—almost a mute. How many of us have heard of Richard Baxter? Who was Richard Baxter? Why, a simple lover of the Lord, who found this deaf genius and led him into the light. When Joel Stratton laid his hand on the shoulder of John B. Gough, a

drunkard in the gutter, and said to him, "Man, there is a better life for you than this," he did not know what he was doing. There are not many of us who remember anything about Joel Stratton, but we will never forget John B. Gough. When Robert Eaglen enabled young Spurgeon to see the Lamb of God, he did a greater work than if he had fed 5,000 people. Do you not think so? When George Warner helped Gipsey Smith to newness of life, he did a more glorious thing than if he had made the lame to walk or the blind to see.

The greatest thing any Christian worker can do is to go out and find somebody. One individual with his own experience must touch the other individual with his. Do not go out after everybody. Go out after somebody. The Men and Religion Movement is good, but a *Man* and Religion movement is better. One cannot help noting that the popular note in many churches to-day is the humanitarian note. So many pulpits are turning to the political and the popular and the civic and the industrial. Ours is an age of solidarity. Is our work ethical or educational or social? Is the Church

a lecture bureau? Shall we secularise our work in order to make it popular? Let us put first things first. Well, which is first? There are some of us who believe that if we put anything above evangelism we will fail. We believe in being interested in humanity, but we take it that our first business is men. And the best way to get the religion of humanity is to get religion into men. The best way to get my brother out of the slum is first to get the slum out of my brother. To be sure, social salvation is the goal, but individual salvation is the path thither. And surely that means laymen getting to work. The ideal church service will come when the minister preaches to his people and every member goes out and carries the message in a man-to-man canvass —and not till then. "Like a mighty army moves the Church of God." When the Christianity army moves that way, in a sort of individual skirmish, we will not object to the stanza.

Nothing in that little classic of Henry Clay Trumbull's, "Individual Work for Individuals," impressed me so much as this paragraph:

"I have been for more than twenty-five years an editor of a religious periodical, that has had a circulation of more than a hundred thousand a week during much of the time. Meanwhile I have published more than thirty different volumes. Yet looking back upon my work, in all these years, I can see more direct results for good through my individual efforts with individuals, than I can know of through all my spoken words to thousands upon thousands of persons in religious assemblies, or all my written works on the pages of periodicals or of books." Most ministers wish for large congregations. There is no use in disclaiming it. A crowd is mightily attractive, but a crowd is also mightily perilous. Jesus avoided crowds. He was on the search for the man. "I sought for a man." A theological professor who conducts a Bible Class here in New York told me the other day that he was greatly disappointed with his work. He said he had only 20 or 25 men in his class and he did not feel like wasting his time. The room, he thought, should be crowded. What shall we say to this? Well, for one thing, it certainly was not the pro-

gramme of Jesus. It is not even the law of nature. Science tells us that every atom in the universe acts upon every other atom, but only by acting on the atom that is nearest to it.

I was interested in a little clipping I ran across last winter. It was in regard to the class recently confirmed by the Bishop of New York in the Church of the Holy Communion. The class numbered ninety-six. And the clipping was to this effect: "Every member of the class is pledged to seek out and present as a candidate, within one month, at least one person who, by virtue of age, may be eligible for confirmation." What a splendid ideal! Let us, then, hear the conclusion of the whole matter. These are two more things that God hath joined together. Let no labourer in the Vineyard; let no church in the great marching army, ever attempt to pull them apart—evangelism and personal work. Will we have any stars in our crown? That depends on the fidelity with which we fulfil our commission. The Church is always busy looking about for new methods. We can look about us for new methods until our eyelashes get white. There is

only one method, and it dates from the time of Andrew and Philip. It is not spectacular; it is not dramatic: it is commonplace. But the commonplace things are, after all, the great things. The man who can freshen a commonplace truth is a great man. And this old truth is going to be the final surprise: "For inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me." When King George steps down from his throne and pins a medal on the sleeve of some war-scarred hero, it is considered a singular honour. And when we stand in the presence of our King and hear the words, "Well done," surely that will be glory indeed. "Then shall each man have his praise from God."

SALVATION AND SURRENDER

CHAPTER III

SALVATION AND SURRENDER

"Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."—Mark 12:34.

THEN it is possible, it would seem, to be near the portals and yet not to pass within the gates. Of course we are aware of the truth of this in secular matters. An interesting article could be written on the people who almost succeeded. Hannibal almost entered the city of Rome. Tilden was almost elected President of the United States. In the Chicago World's Fair there was exhibited the glass model of a mine. The owner had sunk his shaft 500 feet and in despair abandoned the quest. He sold out to another man, who went a few feet farther and struck ore.

One of the strange happenings in life is the sad occurrences that sometimes transpire when it is thought the danger point has been passed

and victory seems assured. Captain Scott and his brave band of explorers, after having reached the South Pole, and after having almost completed a safe and triumphant return, starved to death and perished within eleven miles of their base of supplies. Whymper, the Alpine climber, scaled the Matterhorn many times. He describes in one of his books the strange sensation he experienced when, on one occasion, he was plunged 2,000 feet down the slope of the Jungfrau. But the great mountaineer broke a limb getting on the platform at Liverpool to deliver a lecture describing his perilous ascent. Margaret Fuller, with her little baby, lost her life off Fire Island. They had almost reached home when the vessel was wrecked. William the Third, who had come unscathed out of the battlefield, met his death on the return home by the stumble of his horse over a little mole hill. "I have seen," says Dante, "a ship which had sailed safely over all the seas, go down upon the harbour bar." Indeed, did not the "Royal George" do that very thing when only twenty miles from Quebec, her destination?

One of the staggering tragedies of history was the loss of the "Royal Charter." She had sailed around the world, and had just arrived at Queenstown. A message was sent to Liverpool that she would dock the next morning. The Lord Mayor and thousands of citizens were all prepared to give her a great civic welcome. But she went down in the night with all on board. Dr. William M. Taylor—at one time pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle—was asked to convey the sad news to the wife of the first mate, who was a member of his church. Ringing the door-bell, a little girl accosted him:

"Oh, Dr. Taylor," she shouted, "I thought it was papa! You know, he is coming home today."

"You must excuse us, Doctor," said the wife, "but you see we are looking every moment for my husband."

"My dear woman," said Dr. Taylor, "I have bad news for you"—and he gently broke the awful tidings.

Yes, it is not an uncommon thing in our daily life to miss a prize, Tantalus-like, just on

the verge of victory. And it should not surprise us to learn that, in the things of the higher life, a like miscarriage sometimes occurs too. It is possible to be quite close to some great spiritual secret and yet be unconscious of the wealth that lies hidden at our feet. The human and the divine may be contiguous, and yet there may be no mystical communion. We may approach some great spiritual discovery and yet not cross the invisible and mysterious boundary that makes it ours. For instance, some of the loveliest people we know are not followers of Jesus Christ. They are cultured, they are amiable, they are generous, they are high-minded, they have noble ideals. Outwardly their lives are blameless, but they are not Christians. They have depth of feeling, sincerity of motive, purity of life; but they have never taken the step of distinct personal surrender that makes them followers of the Master. They cannot say, "Whom, having not seen, I love." They know not "the power of His resurrection." They are like the scribe in our story—"not far from the Kingdom."

It is not always easy to explain these contradictions, but certainly it must be confessed that some men who repudiate the doctrines of the Church have the spirit of Christ. Like Lessing, they are Christians with their hearts and non-Christians with their heads. There came to my acquaintance quite recently the case of a distinguished physician whose father was a clergyman in the Church of England. He calls himself an agnostic. He frankly confesses that he can accept little or nothing of the Apostles' Creed. But every Monday and Saturday he gives his services exclusively to the poor. His whole life is a sacrifice for others; and wherever a deed of sacrifice is done, is not the place holy ground? Is God not there? He has a real passion for duty and righteousness and what the Apostle calls "the work of the Lord." And the question keeps arising in the heart: "What would Jesus say to this man?" Would He condemn him for his revolt against the intellectual articles of our credenda? Or would He hail him as His unconscious follower? Or would He say, as He said to this scribe, "Thou are not far from the Kingdom"?

It may be well, then, to look cautiously into the wording of this very suggestive story and see, if we can, what was the lack in the life of this young lawyer that led Jesus to say that he was within reach of a great revelation, within sight of a great discovery—a great and gracious and priceless possession.

And first of all, is it not true that he was not far from the Kingdom because he was not far from the King? He had come into direct touch with the Great Teacher Himself (and possibly not for the first time, either), and was not that a rare and wondrous privilege? It is not at all unlikely that they had met each other many times in their journeyings about the city. For both lived in Palestine, and Palestine was but a little corner of the Empire. He was not, like Cornelius, a native of Cæsarea; or like Ananias, a citizen of Damascus. He was a Jew, trained in Jewish lore, and most likely was a young man of about the Master's own age. Perhaps he had seen Him work some of His mighty works. Maybe he had listened to some of His public teachings. He had watched the efforts of the Pharisees to en-

snare Him in His talk. He had heard His answers. But at any rate, he met Him now face to face (whether for the first time or not is not really important), and surely it must have been an unspeakable advantage to have come into such close and individual touch with Him who spake as never man spake, who wrought as never man wrought, who saw as never man saw.

When one reads "Evangeline," it is not the pain of her parting with Gabriel that is most impressive. It is when, in the two boats, after so many years of wandering and seeking each other, they came so near that they might have reached out and clasped hands; but alas, they were not aware of each other's presence! That was the supreme moment in Evangeline's life when, on the moonlit waters, she came so near to him whose life was her life, whose love was her love—and missed him. And surely the supreme moment in the life of this young scribe was when he met the Great Teacher face to face and experienced His searching and loving regard. No doubt he had never before been so near to the heart of things. One can-

not see how even a mere geographical proximity could help lifting him to a loftier level. Even Judas must at times have been very near the gate. To have lived for three years, on more or less intimate terms, with such wisdom and sinlessness, must have meant moments of very serious disturbance and reflection on the higher things of life.

Then, I think he was not far from the Kingdom because he was intellectually convinced. The context is careful to tell us how Jesus observed that he answered discreetly. And the word used is a word that has to do with the mind. We might translate it "intelligently." The Master means that this young scribe shows an intellectual grasp of the things of the Spirit. He had a true insight into the inner meaning of the law. He answered, we are told, as one having *"nous."* Perhaps I am reminded that there is no such insight; that the natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. This, of course, is true, but we must bear in mind, too, that the command is "to love God with all our

mind," i.e., in the fullest exercise of our enlightened reason.

The popular idea is that the mind has nothing to do with religion, but surely that must be a very partial interpretation of the facts of the case. Man is body and mind and spirit. It would be a very strange thing if, in the highest sphere, these must be kept apart, like water-tight bulkheads in a ship. Has the body nothing to do with the Spirit? Is not the body the temple of the Spirit? Paul speaks of the "mind of the Spirit" which is the "mind of Christ." He means that he sees all things in God. Chalmers calls it "intellectual regeneration." Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that when a man becomes a Christian his intellect is spiritualised. John Locke once said that only that which justifies itself to the reason and at the same time wins man's free assent can exercise an inward control over his nature; to which Schopenhauer added: "Faith is like love—it cannot be forced." Surely the gate to the kingdom, says another writer, is not so low that it will not admit that part of us which is above our shoulders. "The re-

ligion which is not, from first to last, amenable to reason can never win the thoughtful inquirer. It is simply superstition in disguise."

I think the whole difficulty is due to our definition of what religion really is. If religion is understanding spiritual things, then it would seem to be true that the mind is incapable of any such natural apprehension. Mere intellectual perception can never penetrate to the things of the Spirit of God. But is the definition correct? Is religion understanding spiritual things? Is that not religious discernment rather? We must not confound religion with religious knowledge. Pure and undefiled religion is not a knowledge of things, but a knowledge of God; and that is gained by love. Mr. H. G. Wells has written a short story about a man who once found his way into a community of blind people who were isolated from the rest of the world. He found that no one in the valley had the slightest idea of the gift of sight. And when he began to tell them what he saw, they laughed and said he was mad. Then the story goes on to tell of his falling in love with one of the young

women of the place, and at last of her getting a faint glimmering of what he meant. And the moral of the tale is true: how love becomes the medium of communication. And why may not love also become the medium of a spiritual interchange? If religion is love, then the mind has everything to do with it, because the mind can love. And not only can the mind love, but the strength can also love. This is the command. We are not to love with a blind and stumbling devotion. We are to put intelligence into the exercise. We are to love what is true. And we are to put intensity into it. "Love with all thy might." Love is not perfect until it commands the energy of our whole being. If God is one, the Master says, we should love Him with our united nature; the idea being to exhaust the one idea of the whole man. Of course it takes more than the assent of the mind to make a Christian, but when the mind is won there is much that is hopeful. The next step is the heart, and then the will. And when there is the assent of the heart and the consent of the will, then we have reached the region of Faith, and when we have got

that far we have already passed within the gates.

And then, again, one leans favourably to this lawyer because he seems to have been an earnest young man. There is a tone of sincerity in his voice; he was not a mere polemical debater. Is it not a fact that when men begin getting flippant about spiritual things there is usually something wrong with their lives? A young man troubled with doubts once came to see Moody, and the evangelist said to him: "If all your doubts were dissipated, would you surrender?" The young man hesitated. "Well now," he went on, "if there is any uncertainty, your difficulty cannot be intellectual —it must be moral." This whole story throbs with earnestness. The man was stirred to the very deeps of his nature. He was reverently feeling his way. His attitude was sympathetic. He had an affinity of soul for the very essence of true religion—an interior righteousness.

Was it not a wonderful step, for instance, to acknowledge that the spiritual side of sacrifice was the great thing? Think of a Jew confessing that love to God is more acceptable

than all the ceremonies of the legal economy; that rites and oblations were worthless while the heart was not involved. Was not that a great and far-reaching confession? We are not told in as many words, but the whole tenor of the story indicates that he was a wholesome young man. He had not played fast and loose with the laws of God. He had not sowed his wild oats. He had not run the gamut of revelry and riot. His life had a true ethical ring to it. He was a moral fellow.

Of course, I am well aware that this is delicate ground, and that no man is saved by his morality; but hasn't the Church not infrequently given the impression that a man's high, clean tone sometimes is not really an advantage? Are we not sometimes tempted to say that the publicans and harlots will enter the Kingdom sooner than the man of upright life? And do we not forget, when we speak thus, that the class to which Jesus refers is the self-righteous class, and that pride was the target of his fierce intolerance? I cannot myself believe that the surest way to the lofty is by way of the low, because it contradicts the fact of a reasonable

gospel. Some months ago we were all reading in the daily press the tragic story of a young girl betrayed by her lover. She wrote letters to him in the agony of her loneliness and approaching motherhood. They were most affectionate and tender appeals. But instead of rushing to her relief, he took her to a lonely marsh, beat her to death with an oar, and threw her dead body into the lake. The man was convicted and sentenced, and the morning after his death his repentance was published. In it he speaks of his joy and peace and rest. He speaks of "going home." We are not denying his repentance, but would it not have been more in harmony with the spirit of his confession to have remained quiet about it all? Would it not have been much better to have saved his words exclusively for the ears of God rather than for the pages of yellow journalism and the eyes of a prurient public? Personally, I have little faith in such repentances. The old conception of preparing for dying is false to the teaching of Scripture. Right living is the only preparation for right dying. The way to prepare to meet God is to

live with Him every day and strive to do His will. Fill each golden hour as it goes by so full of lovely things that some day it will be a joy and comfort to think of them. I have heard it said that if a man be not a Christian it matters not a whit whether his life is even decent. And it has always seemed to me such an unworthy caricature. We have talked so much about the greatest sinners becoming the greatest saints that many have concluded that the shortest cut to Heaven is through the slums. Thank God that the blackest sinner may be washed. It is the very glory of the Cross. But surely it is not the more excellent way. That way, as we learn here, is the way of love, the way of keeping the commandments, the way of obedience to all the laws of God. Many a poor prodigal has been maimed for ever in the far country. There are lost blessings which even Divine forgiveness cannot restore. There is many a child of grace who would give his right hand if he could thereby untie the knots of the past; yes, if he could even cut them and retain the line intact. What true penitent does not deplore his record?

"Wounds of the soul, though healed, will ache,
The reddening scars remain
And make confession;
Lost innocence returns no more,
We are not what we were
Before transgression."

And, once more, I think he was not far from the Kingdom because he was not satisfied. He wanted something he did not have. He felt a strange emptiness in his life. It was not a sense of sin that drew him so much as a feeling of incompleteness—a hungering for the life which is life indeed. There was in his soul a sob after something he could not express. Just around the corner from my home is the Museum of Natural History. Last week I went in to see the seismograph that has only recently been installed. I said to the curator:

"The new aqueduct is only a block away; do not the blastings over here in the Park interfere with it?"

"No," he said; "no surface tremor affects it the slightest. You see, its pulsations come from the earth's interior."

And the depths of this young man's soul were stirred from the very interior.

"Thou hast put eternity in the heart."

We are not told, but let us hope that the young scribe took the last step and clinched the covenant. For it takes more than intellect to pass through the gates into the City of Light. It takes more than earnestness; it takes more than moral excellence. It takes trust; it takes decision. It takes the complete surrender of the soul. One cannot learn to swim as long as he keeps even a toe on the earth, and as long as the heart has any connection whatever with the world there can be no joyous assurance.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

FOOD AND FATNESS

CHAPTER IV

FOOD AND FATNESS

"He feedeth on ashes."—Isaiah 44:20.
"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters."—Isaiah 55:1, 2.

"He feedeth on ashes." That is to say, the man's appetite is depraved. There are heathen tribes who, in time of famine, use clay as a substitute for flour. Humboldt tells us that on the banks of the Orinoco he found the native Indians using a white, powdery earth, and kneading it into balls, and storing it up against the long winter season. Dan Crawford, in his book, "Thinking Black," speaks of dumplings made from the roots of bushes mixed with moss. They have a small percentage of decayed plant life in them. It is of the nature of silica, and contains just enough nutriment to sustain existence at the starvation point for a little while.

WHAT GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER

In the chapter before us, the prophet is attacking idolatry; and he is very graphic. There is a scathing satire in his words. He is describing the whole process of God—manufacture. "What profit is there," he says, "in your graven image?" The carpenter hewed it and the blacksmith clamped it. That of which it is made is lifeless. It is only the stock of the cedar tree. With the small pieces of kindling wood he makes a fire and warms his hands and bakes his bread and roasts his meat. And with the residue thereof he maketh a god. So part of the tree becomes a god and part becomes ashes. That is to say, he tries to find in the very stuff that warms his body something that will cheer his poor, cold, lonely heart.

And the prophet's purpose is clear—to shame men out of such folly, to rebuke them, to show them the puerility of it all. He uses humour, he uses irony, he uses invective. "Shall we fall down," he says, "to the stock of a tree? It is made after the figure of a man; according to the beauty of a man." What profit is there in kneeling down to a graven image or a molten image and saying:

"Deliver me; Thou art my God"? But all his word pictures are simply weapons to expose the utter childishness of idol-worship. It is vanity, it is deception, it is feeding on ashes.

Well, you say, times have changed; this is ancient history; this is the forest primeval; no one to-day bows down to wood and stone. No doubt that is true, in civilised lands at least. I frankly confess that the Second Commandment, in its material sense, means very little to me. I go into a Roman Church and these crucifixes and images of the Saviour tempt me not the slightest to bow down to them. Indeed, they often have quite a sobering effect. I feel sometimes humbled with a feeling of devotion as I creep noiselessly through these shrines. One often wishes that we had a little more of their reverence in our Protestant temples. The New Testament says very little about material idolatry. Paul scarcely alludes to it. It is another kind of idolatry that is dangerous to-day. It is spiritual idolatry we need to fear to-day. The world is full of what John Wesley called "inward idols." Covetousness in Scripture is identified with idolatry.

St. Paul says, "Covetousness, which is idolatry." "Beware of covetousness," says the Master, "for a man's true life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which it possesseth."

I sometimes think that one of the most surprising verses in the whole Bible is that last verse in the First Epistle of John. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." "My little children, keep yourselves from the idols." The commentator in the Expositor's Bible calls the verse "an eloquent shudder." Remember, John is writing to Christians. "Little children," he says. He means, those who have been born again. The fact that there can be such a thing as a Christian idol is almost startling. We have heard much of heathen idols, but here we are told of Christian idols. John is an old man now, and he is writing to the Church at Ephesus; and he says: "Beware of Christian idolatry. There are rivals to the one true God. 'My little children, keep yourselves from the idols.'"

"Whatsoever cometh as a cloud between
The eye of faith and things unseen,

Causing that bright world to disappear
Or seem less lovely or its hopes less dear,
That is our idol, though it bear
Affection's impress or devotion's air."

Now that is very odd, is it not? That a Christian should engage in idolatry seems incongruous. What is an idol? An idol is a substitute for God. How can a Christian have a substitute for God? Paul says, an idol is *"nothing in the world."* And the supreme tragedy of life is that we put a great Nothing in place of a Something. And the Apostle says, "My little children, guard yourselves." Be on your guard. The word he uses means to watch, to be vigilant, to be on the alert. Guard yourselves as an officer guards a treasure. Be on the lookout, as a sailor is. "And there were shepherds abiding in the fields keeping watch over their flocks by night." It is the same word that is used. "Take heed and beware of covetousness." The same word again. "My little children, guard yourselves from the idols."

This, then, is the old prophet's description of idolatry. It is "feeding on ashes." And

one does not require much imagination to appreciate the metaphor, it is so vividly unpleasant. The gritty cinders get into the teeth. They irritate the tongue. They make the lips dry, and the gums hard and bitter. And what is worst of all, they do not nourish the body. They only cause torture and distress. There is no nutriment in ashes. Ashes are dead things. Ashes are the particles left over after combustion. They will not even burn. Science tells us that everything in this world that will not burn is something that has been burned already. The black savage can live for a little while on some forms of clay, but nothing can live on ashes. No cactus can live on ashes. Even a worm cannot live on ashes. It is a symbol of utter collapse and drought and death and ruin. And for a man to try to feed his immortal soul on idols is a parallel case in the life of the spirit; it is the direst, bitterest mockery. It is feeding on ashes.

And now, after all this spurious and vain and mocking recital, may we turn for a moment to our second text a little further on. It is more refreshing and satisfying. It is like

leaving the hot, arid desert for the murmur and coolness of the busy brook. The allegory, too, is a beautiful one. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?" Literally, for that which is deceitful bread; for that which is no bread at all. And it needs to be noted that in Verse 11 the purpose of salvation is embodied in the word which goes forth from Jehovah's mouth. The one hope of this exiled people was in the *word,* for which they waited more than they that watch for the morning. "So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void." The word is the revelation of the Lord. "In the beginning was the Word." We do not confine it, of course, to the Bible. God speaks to us in many ways. He speaks in history, in conscience, in prayer; but He speaks pre-eminently through His apostles and prophets. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by

the prophets, hath in these last times spoken unto us by His Son." "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever." Here is an invincible stronghold. Here is a well of satisfying endurance. Here is bread and wine and milk and honey. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread at all? "Incline your ear and come unto Me. Hear and your soul shall live. Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good and let your soul delight itself in fatness." God is what the heart of man cries out for, and it is the purpose of the word to reveal God.

Now the word has a three-fold ministry. It is a weapon; it is a light; and it is the food of our spiritual natures. Let us glance at these metaphors for just a moment in the light of Christian experience.

I. It is a *weapon.* We read in the letter to the Ephesians of the armour of the Christian. "Take unto you," the Apostle says, "the whole armour of God . . . the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." It is no dead symbol of the past; it

is a living instrument. It is an utterance. It is the written word revealing the living Word. It is the sword of the Spirit. It penetrates to the joints and marrow. Have you not felt sometimes when reading your Bible that it was hurting you, that it was piercing you and laying bare the secrets of your interior life? Oftentimes this is a very painful exposure. The surgeon takes his knife and cuts into the flesh. He is on the search for trouble. And that is the way with the Bible. Some books appeal to the intellect, some appeal to the sense of humour, some appeal to the dramatic, some to the sensual, some to the artistic. But the Bible's appeal is to the conscience. It searches out our spirits. It never flatters. It unmasks the disease; and the successful Bible teacher is the one who knows his weapon and can wield it in practical Christian work. "All Scripture is profitable for correction, for disciplining in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect." "For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints

and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart."

How the illustrations of this come crowding from the pages of biography! Here is Augustine lying under the tree in the garden and hearing the word spoken in his ear: "Not in drunkenness and wantonness, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh." Or we might cite the case of Bunyan as he was playing ball one Sunday on the village green. The word came to him, the dart struck and stuck, and he went home with the arrow in his heart. Or we might instance the case of Hedley Vicars, or any one of a hundred others, to prove what a weapon this Book is. Verily, indeed, it is sharp and piercing and searching. It reaches the inmost depths. "Thou hast set our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance."

There is one verse in the Fourth Gospel that always fills me with courage. It is found in the 35th verse of the 10th Chapter: "The Scripture cannot be broken." And when we remember that the speaker is none other than the Incarnate Word Himself, the statement

becomes filled with a tremendous import. "The Scripture cannot be broken." The Holy Book cannot be destroyed. It cannot be undone; it is invincible. It is "firmly established," as Bengel puts it. Critics may dissect it and carve it and mutilate it with some modern surgical dagger, but the Great Teacher says it is deathless and enduring. It resists every onslaught. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away." And it is worth noting that when He spoke these words He was referring to a little, unimportant Psalm of eight verses—the 82d Psalm. Even the minor parts cannot be broken. It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail. The critics say that the Bible has gone to pieces. But only the Destructive Critics say it, and these are comparatively few in number. The great majority of our Higher Critics are saintly scholars who are devoting their lives to giving us the real Bible and so making it more precious to the Church. Much of their work every up-to-date student heartily accepts. There never was such an armoury of weapons

for the defence of the Bible as there is to-day; but let us remember that the greatest weapon is the Bible itself. What does Jesus say about His own Book? That is our supreme Damascus blade. He ought surely to know. Let us study how to use it so that when Satan comes and says, "Command that these stones be made bread," we may grasp our glorious Excalibur and imitate our Master and say, "It is written."

II. Then think of the Bible as a *light.* "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." "The entrance of Thy word giveth light." Paul tells Timothy that the Scriptures are able to make him wise. He means the wisdom which enlightens. Dr. Wallace, who was the official clerk at Westminster, likens the Scriptures to a lantern rather than a light. They shine, he says, but with a borrowed light. It is the light of God that shines in the Book. He is the only true light. And what is a lantern? A lantern is a vessel that holds the light. There are many varieties of lanterns, but the purpose of them all is the same. It is to hold the torch that shines forth

for the guidance and comfort of man. But we never know a book until we know the soul of that book. And the soul of the Bible is Jesus. To Him give all the prophets witness. He is the light of the world, but He is also the Light of the Word. "These are they which testify of Me." A return to the Word of God has always sent men to the Son of God. His star shines dimly through the Old Testament, but in the New Testament He floods the skies with glory. His star becomes a Sun. "The Sun of righteousness hath arisen with healing in His wings." "Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light." Henrich Heine was a sceptic, but he once made a very memorable remark. "He who has lost his God can find Him in this volume, and he who has never known Him will there be met by the breath and light of the Divine."

And so, I repeat, the Bible is a great light. If a man denies it, do not stop to argue with him. What he needs is not argument but eyes. Just tell him to go forth and do a little travelling, and use his eyes. Send him to the dark Continent and see what it has done there.

Send him down to Erromanga and see what has happened there. They have no idols there any more. If you want idols you have to come here to New York where they are manufactured. Tell the poor, benighted fellow to go to Uganda. Kaulbach's great cartoon represents Luther holding up an open Bible like some statue of liberty enlightening the world. And it is a true conception. Where this book has not gone, there is darkness. Where it has gone, but is partially obscured, there is twilight. But where it is free and open and unhindered, there is the light of civilisation. All that is needed to show what a light the Book is, is a map of the world. If a tree is known by its fruits, then no tree in all the fields of literature is like this tree. The best way to measure an institution is to measure its influence. The great rivers of the world are important according to their mileage and navigability and utility. Just so with books. A book that lives on and feeds the race for ages must be a great book. Here is an old volume, a very old volume. It has come down to us from the very twilight of time, older than the Pyramids,

older than Homer, older than Cadmus. The Book of Job existed before Cadmus brought his letters into Greece. And yet, though hoary with age, its youthful vigour remains. It has grown younger with the years. Many of these documents go back into what we call the prehistoric, and yet they are as fresh to-day as the page that fell yesterday damp and wet from the press.

III. And then, lastly and best of all, the Bible is *food.* It is food for our spiritual natures. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Some plants grow without either earth or water. Simply hang them in the air and that is all they need. But grace is not such a plant. Grace needs good, solid meat. Grace needs something substantial. Grace needs sun and earth and air and water. "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The hyacinth is an interesting flower. It will flourish for a little while in a vase of water, but if it is to perpetuate itself it must have soil. And if a Christian is to grow, he too must

have soil; he must be rooted in the Bible; he must draw nourishment therefrom. He must read it. And he must read it regularly. A reptile, they say, can gorge himself once a week on a meal, but not so a Christian. A neglected Bible means a lean soul, a barren spiritual experience. She was a wise mother who gave a bookmark to her boy on condition that he would never allow it to remain two days in succession at the same page. The Christian who neglects his Bible will soon shrivel and waste away. That is all there is to it. He will go into decline. God has joined the two together. Let me recall to you that little couplet of John Richard Green's, because it embodies a very sure and a very dangerous truth:

> "These hath God married
> And no man shall part—
> Dust on the Bible
> And drought in the heart."

"Search the Scriptures," we are commanded. Not scrutinise, but search. The word used is the word that the Apostle makes use of in Romans when he says: "He that

searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." Surely, when God is searching our hearts, He is not looking for faults and flaws. He is looking rather, is He not, for what is beautiful and like unto Himself? He is looking for those sacred longings which are the expression of the Spirit's influence. Nor are we told to parse; we are to search: there is treasure in the Book. How fond we are of parsing! In school we would take an immortal poem and parse it; sometimes parse the life out of it. We said: "The curfew tolls the knell of parting day"; the, an article, curfew, a noun, tolls, a verb, etc. It was all incision and dissection. In this way Life becomes degraded into Syntax. The prosaic mind loses the inspiration because of prepositions and conjunctions. It is something like a man listening to a great orchestra and trying to account for the sweet strains by analysing the mechanical structure of the different instruments. And many there are who read the Word this way. They cut it up and so kill its soul. But the Book itself says, when we are pulling it apart—when we are stabbing it with

some cruel critical stiletto: "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." The sad fact is, that we can analyse the written word and miss the living Word. "Search the Scriptures." A great divine has said: "Eat up the Book." Digest it. Make a diet of the Word. Food lying on the table does not strengthen us. The Bible is a book of comfort; it fortifies our faith; it strengthens. Never mind a key to the Scriptures—the Book is its own key.

I have heard it said that some theological students lose their religion while they are getting their theology. If that is true, it is certainly a lamentable exchange. We do not know the Bible by studying its form and structure. Studying Biblical criticism is not studying the Bible. Last summer, during my vacation, I was visited one day and asked to conduct the funeral of one of the old inhabitants. And the request was made that I should say a few words at the grave. I hinted that I had not been acquainted with the deceased, and that it was a difficult thing to do. But the morning of the funeral his daughter sent me

his Bible, and what a revelation! I never saw anything quite like it. It was like looking into the holy of holies of a man's soul. Favourite verses underlined; little, short, simple comments; prayers for the guidance of the Spirit. Some of the pages almost worn with fingering, like old bank notes. Everywhere the marks of use. Dates when Communion was taken. Texts that troubled him. I can never forget that book. I noticed it was only twelve years old, but it looked as if it might have come out of some mediæval museum. If you were to die to-morrow, dear friend, and your Bible were to fall into your minister's hands, what tale would it tell?

I believe the hour is come when it is our duty to talk less about the Bible and to read it more. The world to-day is not reading the Bible. The world to-day is feeding largely on fiction. To a large number, the Book is a closed Book. In one of our large universities out West last winter there was held one day an examination on the Bible. The ignorance was simply appalling. In a class of several hundred sophomores, only fourteen knew in

what town Jesus was born. The claim has quite recently been made that more Bibles have been sold this past year than any other one hundred books combined. The fact is, we have heard so much about the numbers of Bibles printed and circulated that we have almost come to think that buying a book and reading it are the same thing. Do you recall the sentence pronounced upon Satan, "Dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life"? The Devil feeds upon dust. He feeds upon ashes. He said to Jesus, "Command that these stones be made bread." But Jesus answered, "Man shall not live by bread alone." Why should we feed upon ashes and call it bread? "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. Hearken diligently unto me and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." There is something exceedingly suggestive in the fact that the word Vanity is found one hundred and ten times in the Old Testament and only three times in the New. I would like to lead you to the fountain this morning. Every other brook runs dry. I was almost going to say that every other book runs

dry. The greatest need of the Church of Christ to-day is a knowledge of the Scriptures. Cease feeding on ashes. Feed on the living bread which cometh down from heaven. "They that make idols shall be like unto them." That is the tragedy of it. Our idols cannot lift us one inch beyond themselves.

"The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from its throne,
And worship only Thee."

MARKS AND MASTER

CHAPTER V

MARKS AND MASTER

"From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear branded on my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."—Gal. 6:17.

THIS is a world of trouble. "In the world ye shall have trouble," said the Master, and we must all expect our share. Paul certainly had his share. From the very start it had been peril and pain and hardship. He gives us the list in one of his letters—"Stripes and stones and shipwrecks and labour and travail and hunger and thirst and fasting and cold and nakedness." It certainly is a strenuous inventory. They show the hero that he was.

But these are not the ravages to which he refers in this passage. That great "Hercules of the faith" cared little for scourging. Scourging did not disturb him to any serious or sleepless extent. He rather courted it as a

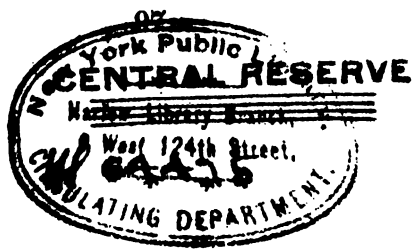
privilege and an honour. Does he not say, "I am now ready to be offered"; "I glory in tribulation"; "I rejoice in my sufferings"?

I think it is important, at the outset, to note that the Greek word used here for "trouble" is not the usual word. It does not mean tribulation. It is the word made use of in that story St. Luke tells, of the man who had retired to rest, and a friend at midnight knocked on his door and cried out: "Lend me three loaves." And the man answered back, out of his semi-slumber: "Trouble me not; my children are with me in bed." What he means is: "Do not annoy me." Annoyance! That is the idea. The thing that annoyed Paul and grieved him, was that there were some who disclaimed his apostleship. The regularity of his ordination had been impugned.

And this is his answer to the dissent. The words are warm and glowing and fervid. They throb with feeling. He does not argue; he does not debate. He does not appeal to the cold duel of logic. He points to the scars. The branding irons of Christ have imprinted these on me, he says. These are my testimo-

nials. "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear branded on my body the stigmata of Jesus."

Now this surely is a great and thrilling challenge. It comes straight from the man's heart. It rings with reality. The marks—literally, the *stigmata,* our word stigma; only the English derivative has changed its meaning. To-day the word carries with it a suggestion of infamy, but it did not always. It meant originally the cut of a sharp instrument or the burn made with a hot iron. You have seen the Western cowboys on the desert with their ponies. Every horse bears the monogram of his master. It is burned into the creature's flesh. So, likewise, were the slaves of old impressed. They were branded. And the Apostle, introducing himself in the first chapter of this Epistle, describes himself as the *apostolos* (the apostle) of Jesus Christ, and in Philippians as the *doulos* (the slave). In Romans, he couples the two words together. I am an Apostle, he says; I have been called to the work; I have been separated from my mother's womb. But I am more. I am the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bondman of the Crucified. I am His slave. His lines are stamped upon me. I carry the evidences. Note these scars. It was in the service of the King that I won these. These are not chalk marks. They were not drawn with carbon or graphite. This is the work of a branding iron. "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear branded on my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

If any man asks for a proof of my Apostleship, says Paul, I have no parchment to show him; I have no testimonials from Peter or John; I have no recommendations whatsoever. It is true I have not seen the Lord in the flesh; I was not an eyewitness; I never saw His mighty works or heard His wondrous words. I was not elected to the holy college by lot. I was born as it were out of due time. I conferred not with flesh and blood. I point to none of these things; I appeal to the tribunal above. I point rather to the direct call of the risen Lord; I point to these groups of ransomed souls; I point to my labours as evidences; I point to my sufferings. I point to the results of my preaching—"The seal of mine

apostleship are ye in the Lord." I point to the *stigmata.*

To be sure, the marks to which he refers in the clause before us are primarily the physical scars received at the hands of his enemies. No doubt about that! The Apostle never accounted a strange thing that he should be called upon to suffer for his Lord. He rather expected it, indeed. Yes, he gloried in it. But these things were not his main credentials. Do we begin to commend ourselves? he says. "Do we need epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you? Nay, ye are our epistle, written in our hearts—written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God."

Sir Matthew Hale was a great and good man. He was on the bench when John Bunyan was brought before him for trial. He gave it as his sober opinion that Bunyan had no business preaching the Gospel, that his proper place was mending pots and pans. But Bunyan went on proclaiming his message. He felt he had a commission from a higher Power. John Wesley and George Whitefield were not

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the men to preach. At least, the bishops thought so. Mr. Booth was too sensational in his London work, and the authorities asked him to leave the Church. How often God surprises the world!

But let us return to the text, and let us see, if we can, what application it has for us in these more modern times. And the thought more especially that is in my own mind is this: Should we not all of us bear about in our bodies the superscription of our Owner? Should we not all of us carry about with us the slaying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh? Is not the same hostility to good, which put Him to death, still at work in the world against His servants? Let us look at these things for a moment in the light of our personal experience.

I. And let us begin with these hands of ours. Should we not all bear about in our hands the marks of our Master? The hand is a symbol of service. Should not these hands, then, show the marks of service? There is a science called Palmistry. It is a study which

professes to unfold the future, as well as to unveil the past, by the story of the hand. One may have grave doubts as to its unfolding the future, but it certainly does very often unveil the past. And it is not a new discovery. The old Greeks studied it a long time ago. Aristotle and Pliny both refer to it. And although it is abused shamefully by charlatans and impostors, still there is, no doubt, a germ of truth in it: that the house shows the character of the tenant; that the body is the index of the soul. Helen Keller tells us that, in greeting strangers, the first impression which she receives is not physical but psychical. She says she does not notice whether the hand is hot or cold, large or small, but whether it is tender and sympathetic. We have a little hymn which we sing sometimes:

> "Take my life and let it be
> Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
> Take my hands and let them move
> At the impulse of Thy love."

Christ calls us to service, and the hand is the symbol of service. How often people are

worried over the doctrine of Election! I believe in the doctrine of Election, but it is election to service. Any other kind of election is a reflection on our Heavenly Father's equity. The Lord Jesus does not call people simply to stop them from doing wrong. That would be great, of course, but there is such an infinitely greater truth. He calls us to start us in the path of usefulness and virtue. "I have chosen you and ordained you . . . that ye should go and bring forth fruit." "I have appeared unto thee," the Lord said to Saul, "to make thee a servant and a witness." The vision of the Christian is a call to service. The king in the parable of the wedding feast chose his servants. Why? To sit down at ease in the palace? No, indeed! "To go out into the highways and hedges." Ours is a radiating Gospel. We are called not to die and be saved, but to live and save others. We are elected for the glory of God, but the glory of God is the redemption of the race. We are saved by grace but we are elected to service.

II. And then, our faces! Should we not all bear about on our faces the marks of the

Lord Jesus? At any rate, it is true again—as in the other case—in a worldly sense. We all carry about on our faces the marks that the world makes. Why should they not also express the peace and joy and rapture of our faith? Here is a man whose body shows the signs of drink. We need not dwell on the deep, sad, tragic lines—the bloated eye, the florid features, the nervous pulse, the trembling step. Here is one devoted to the love of Mammon. How certain and clear the marks; the grasping eye, the calculating look, the hard, unfeeling brow. Does not the calm forehead of the student reveal his service to his master Truth? The artist who worships at the shrine of Angelico will ere long in his work proclaim his ideals. Do we not speak of the Tuscan school, the Florentine school, the Flemish school? Let a man be devoted to any great conception and he will reproduce its lines.

In all our department stores to-day there is what is called the "Complaint desk." And I am told that those who sit behind this desk very soon become stern and austere and forbidding in their facial expression. The con-

stant listening to the ugly side of life soon drives away all sweetness. One does not find it difficult to believe the truth of this. And why should it not also be true of the life of the spirit in a higher and deeper sense? "When they beheld the boldness of Peter and John they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." If we are living with God, and talking with God, and communing with God, ought not the light of God to shine in our eye and gleam in our faces? One of the old mystics used to say that "the Christian ought always to be good looking." "They looked unto him and were lightened," the Psalmist says. As the electric light can make minerals shine and reveal their quality by the colour of the flame, even so the life of God in the heart can make the most homely face radiant. When Stephen was dying, they saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. "I have seen God in you," a famous novelist makes one of her characters say of another. According to an old tradition, St. Francis—that sweet and beautiful saint—meditated so long upon the Cross that the

wound-prints of our Lord were said to have reproduced themselves in his body.

Ah, it is not in the flesh that we find the real cicatrix. The real marks are not outward but inward. The scars that are convincing and past dispute are unseen and spiritual. They are in the territory of the soul. The brands were not only on the Apostle's body. They were on his mind and heart as truly as upon his flesh. We can read these lines of suffering in the passion and devotion with which he laboured for the redemption of his fellow-men. And he gloried in them. They were more to him than any medal or any ribbon. The man felt that he belonged to Jesus Christ, and that no sacrifice was too great for his new Master.

A great professor tells us of once preaching a series of sermons on Apologetics. Some one came up at the close of the series and remarked: "I enjoyed the sermons very much, doctor, but I can tell in a much simpler way how it happened that I became a Christian." "How?" said the professor. "Why, I saw Christ in my mother," was the answer. Some one has said that there are seven lives of Christ.

There is a life by Matthew and Mark and Luke and John; that is four. There is a post-resurrection life in the Acts of the Apostles; that is five. There is a prophetic life in the prophecies of the Old Testament; that is six. And the seventh life is to be found in the Christian's own life. "I live, yet not I, for Christ liveth in me." Alexander Whyte, the Edinburgh preacher, tells an anecdote about Thomas Chalmers. "One day," says Dr. Whyte, "I went into a house where one of my people was bedridden. She had been in great pain for many years, and as I went in, I thought she looked so much brighter. I said, 'You are better to-day.' 'Yes, doctor,' she said, 'you know I've had Mr. Chalmers here this afternoon, and do you know, he never comes but when he is gone I think that is just how Jesus Christ would have come to see me. When he sits and looks at me, I think, 'That is how Jesus would have looked'; and when he opens his mouth and speaks, I think, 'That is how Jesus would have spoken'; and when he prays, I almost hear the voice of my Master praying for me, and he always asks for the

things that I think Jesus Himself would like me to have. He never goes but he leaves behind the impression that it has been like a visit from Jesus. He reminds me of Jesus.' "

Dear friends, we are called to live in this world like that.

"Would you like to know the sweetness
Of the secret of the Lord?
Go and hide beneath His shadow;
This shall be your sure reward.
And whene'er you leave the silence
Of that happy meeting place,
You must mind and bear the image
Of the Master in your face."

STRENGTH AND BEAUTY

CHAPTER VI

STRENGTH AND BEAUTY

"Strength and beauty are in His Sanctuary."—Psalm 96:6.

THESE are two more things that God hath joined together. According to Plato, everything in life that is worthy of our devotion can be classified as belonging to the true, the beautiful or the good. Truth lies at the bottom of all science, beauty at the bottom of all art, goodness at the bottom of all religion. The question of the order of importance is an old one that has divided the thought of the race. Perhaps, as Christians, we would be tempted to say: "And now abideth truth, beauty, goodness, these three, but the greatest of these is goodness."

Beauty is one of the most baffling things in life. What it is! How to define it! How

it came to be! It eludes definition or any kind of verbal imprisonment. We do not call a locomotive beautiful—or a Grand Cañon—or a Niagara, but when we behold the purple light of evening settling on the hills, we exclaim: "How glorious!" Logic falters when you ask her to explain why man should admire a Belvidere or a Venus or a Flora or a Mona Lisa. The young Roman walking through the gallery asked his father: "Father, why has this picture a beautiful face?" The father meditated a moment and then answered: "Because, my son, the face is beautiful." Which, by the way, is about as near as dialectics can go. And materialism can go no nearer. For, if it is true that beauty is a thing of the soul, then, if there be no soul, what becomes of the beautiful?

The Bible, I think, never couples beauty and truth; it links mercy and truth, sanctification and truth, but never beauty and truth. Nor does it yoke together beauty and goodness. Goodness is conjoined with mercy. The words that keep company with beauty in the Bible are holiness, wisdom, strength. The

'salmist says: "Strength and beauty are in [is Sanctuary." And the old prophet ex-aims: "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, ' Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O erusalem." The ideal wedding is when beau-r marries strength. And what a happy, uitful union it is!

Instance, to begin with, the Sanctuary of ature. How strong Nature seems! As we alk out into the woods, the first thought that ıpresses itself upon us as we study the sea ıd the hills and the rocks is: what might, hat energy, what overpowering strength ese things declare. Everywhere Nature ırces on our thought the fact of her Omnipo-nce. And everywhere we are confronted, o, with her love for the æsthetic. Not a bud ings on the limbs of a rose-bush but is artis-. As Emerson says:

"Let me go where I will
I hear a sky-born music still,
'Tis not in the stars alone
Nor in the cups of budding flowers,
But in the mud and scum of things
There always, always something sings."

The Matterhorn is strong, but how gracefully she lifts her awful form! Around her granite sides are "flowers skirting the edges of eternal snow." In Nature, the morning star is fair, the lily is lovely. Nature cannot touch a waterfall in the frosty days of January without drawing exquisite lines. When a lady, in the hearing of Constable, once called an engraving ugly, the great artist replied: "No, madam, there is nothing ugly; I never saw an ugly thing in my life." When, thirty years ago, the ship "Challenger" sank her fathoming line five miles deep into the depths of the Pacific, she brought up a coral. No eye had ever seen it, no hand had ever touched it, but so beautiful was it that it was put on exhibition in the Chicago World's Fair. Explorers tell us that the ice crystals in the polar zone are beautiful beyond words. Not long since a great painter went out to paint an unusual sunset. He sat for a while stunned by the glory. At last his assistant said to him: "Is it not time to begin?" "In a moment," he made answer. And so, lost in the splendour of the matchless vision, he delayed till the great

disc dipped into the sea and a dark veil fell upon the hills.

Perhaps the union is most notable in the mineral kingdom. Take iron, for instance. Iron typifies the strong. It is iron that lends stability to the rocks. And this firm, unyielding mineral is the source, too, of much of the world's beauty. The brilliant marble owes to iron its varied polish. Iron gives to the quartz its lovely colouring. The corundum is made beautiful largely by the iron it contains. It is the iron in the soil that paints the flowers. Verily, strength and beauty are in this sanctuary.

Or take the sanctuaries that man has erected. How eternal they seem! What a noble art is architecture! Architecture cannot express an unworthy thought. You stand before some great cathedral, and you are moved well nigh to tears by its reaching and compelling appeal. It gives one the feeling that the mighty structure was built for Eternity, not time. The foundation of Cologne rests some hundred feet below on rock. How wonderful its carving and statuary and sculpture!

Such harmony and unity! No porphyry was too costly, no exquisite device too delicate. It stirs delight. There is a leap of nature as one regards the marble dream. Verily strength and beauty are in this sanctuary. Indeed, one does not wonder that the architect has ever been the friend of the preacher. Is not true art always religious? Blemish is human: beauty is divine. And beauty is an aid to devotion. It is easier to be good in a garden than in a garret! We are slowly learning that the slum is immoral. When Alonzo Cano, the Spanish artist, lay a-dying, he turned away from the crucifix the priest wore, remarking that he could not bear the sight of such wretched workmanship. The great literary classic combines ornament and depth of thought. Flowery expressions alone are distasteful to the cultured mind. Power of thought alone is apt to be slovenly and heavy. The real artist assures us both.

But it is in the human soul that the union is most perfectly fulfilled. For the heart is a temple, too; it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. "The temple of God is holy, and such are

ye." Plutarch says: "Themistocles filled Athens with beautiful buildings, but virtue was the only object that Aristides had in view." The hero of the primitive age was the man brawny of arm, who could deal the crushing blow. Flint and steel were the primary virtues. Physical strength was the ideal—Hercules tearing the jaws of the lion. Then it was a Hannibal, an Alexander, a Napoleon, who were the idols of the race. Antiquity could sing hymns in praise of prowess on the field of battle, but antiquity never composed a hymn in honour of any Florence Nightingale who came, when the noise of the steel had died away, to minister to the wounded. That would have been weak and soft. The Spartan mother told her boy to come home from the fight either with his shield or upon it. She was the true heroine. But there are strange reversals of magnitude in the trail of the Galilean. Many of the estimates of the past are undergoing surprising transformations. And the spectacle to-day is that of a less militant spirit. The world is on its knees in the presence of the great moral forces. "Know ye

not," says the Apostle, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" The true sanctuary of God is a human soul taken possession of by the divine.

Now, I presume it will be admitted that the two marks of the ideal Christian are just these: Strength and Beauty. Alas, not a common combination, I fear. Some characters are strong, but they are not beautiful; some are beautiful, but they are not strong. Too often it is a one-sided culture, and so misses the sense of proportion. Rousseau could weep over the beauties of an Etruscan vase, but what a bundle of weaknesses he embodied! Some followers of Jesus we meet have strength of conviction, but they are severe and unmerciful. They are so stern and strict as to seem almost unspiritual. They are hard and overexacting in their judgments. They never seem to think that any human soul needs pity. Our forefathers emphasised the harder virtues —the honest, the just, the true. They were men of hickory. Contrariwise, others have the decorative fruits, but they lack the note of

aggressiveness and steadfastness. They are so spiritual as to seem at times impractical. The history of the Christian Church is crowded with these strange contradictions.

Here is Sir Thomas Powell. He turned away from his wife on her knees, and the children clasping his feet, and walked undaunted to the scaffold. Here is Samuel Rutherford. He was an intense partisan in politics and theology. He was bitter in controversy. He published a book called: "A free disputation against pretended liberty of conscience," which Bishop Heber characterised as "the most elaborate defence of persecution which ever appeared in a Protestant country." And yet the letters of Samuel Rutherford are among the most spiritual and devotional pieces of literature in the English language. Here is John Calvin. One would scarcely claim that John Calvin was a beautiful workmanship. He had the stoic insensitiveness to pain; he had the granite of the surrounding mountains in his texture, but then a little furbishing would not have hurt any. Many a man is proud of his Roman integrity, and his Spartan courage,

who lacks pitiably the magic of courtesy and kindness. He leaves the stone unpolished. But surely he would lose nothing, and how much he might gain, if he would smooth down the rough, unyielding parts. Of course the religious man ought to be a strong man. He ought to be a conquering force without and within. He should be established in spirit. A man under the influence of the Spirit of God should be a commanding character. His faith should lift him up above the sense of peril and defeat. One of the Hebrew prophets said: "The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits." But he should also be attractive to the little children, for is not the child the New Testament parable of the Kingdom? He should reflect in a little measure the loveliness of Jesus. Sometimes we are told that Christ did not emphasise sufficiently the heroic, that he was overamiable and sentimental. But this surely is a mistaken idea. "His word was with power," says Luke. "The Kingdom comes with power," adds Mark. "The multitudes glorified God, who had given such power unto men,"

exclaims Matthew. The first impression Jesus made was not of gentleness, as we are all too apt to think. The first impression He made was an impression of power. "He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes." Replying to a critic of this class who was boasting that Jesus was effeminate, Wendell Phillips once said: "You speculate as to whether Jesus was a masculine character. Look at the men who learned of Him most closely—Paul, Luther, Cromwell; were they effeminate?" There is a general impression that the highest type of manhood must live in the clouds, but men like Chinese Gordon and Shaftsbury show the falseness of the conception. Strength is never perfect till it is beautiful, and beauty is never perfect till it is strong; and in Jesus the wedlock is complete.

I went trout fishing last summer, and I noticed that the fishing line I borrowed had a cork tied to it to float it, and a piece of lead to sink it. Both, it seems, were necessary. With cork alone the hook would simply drift down on the surface of the tide; while with lead alone the bait would be dragged below

to lie on the sand. But cork and lead together preserved the proper balance. And so likewise with the poise of the Christian. Strength is the virtue that keeps him steadfast and immovable and true, while beauty makes him bright and hopeful and attractive and buoyant. To be rooted and grounded in the divine life —this is strength; to have the fruits of the Spirit—this is beauty. And when the one marries the other, then we have the ideal alliance. It is the foretaste of the Golden Age when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together.

Of course, it is well to be observed that strength is always a greater virtue than beauty. It is much more to be desired that the ocean liner be safe than that she be ornamental. Before the true artist begins to beautify, he asks for reality to underlay his work. Strength and beauty, the Psalmist says—not beauty and strength. Here, as elsewhere, the husband is the head of the wife; let the wife see that she reverence her husband. Horatius Bonar expresses this same truth in one of his well-known hymns:

" 'Tis first the true, and then the beautiful,
Not first the beautiful, and then the true;
First the wild wood, with rock and fen, and pool,
Then the gay garden, rich in scent and hue.

" 'Tis first the good, and then the beautiful,
Not first the beautiful, and then the good:
First the rough seed, sown in the rougher soil,
Then the flower blossom or the branching wood."

The Psalmist says: "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." He means, in holy array. As the priests in the temple were to minister only in holy attire, so must we likewise be clad. Having received the new nature, we are called upon to deck ourselves in vesture corresponding. It is the beauty of the spiritual apparel, and that is something interior. True beauty is not skin deep; it is soul deep. Holiness is the science of beautiful living.

The old heathen critic said to the sculptor: "Ah, I see you have loaded down your Aphrodite with ornaments because you could not make her beautiful." And another great painter of antiquity once said of his rival's work: "Not being able to make it beautiful, he has made it rich." He meant that he had

made a lavish use of colour. But beauty is not colour; it is not an exterior touch. It is "the mark God puts on virtue." Some one remarked after reading Ruskin: "What a beautiful mind the man has!" And it was Charles Kingsley, was it not, who was overheard murmuring in his last illness: "How beautiful God is!" Socrates was reputed to be the homeliest man in Athens. Aristophanes actually laughed at him on the street one day because he was so unattractive. But how Christlike his prayer: "Ye Gods grant me to become beautiful in the inner man"! Which likewise, it may be worth noting, was Paul's prayer, too, for strength. In his great petition for the Ephesian Christians he prayed: "That they may be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man." Epictetus was lame and sickly and unprepossessing, but are there any words outside the New Testament more beautiful than the words he wished to have uttered at the close of his life? "Have I, O God, in any respect transgressed Thy commands? Have I not used properly the powers Thou gavest me? Have I ever blamed

Thee? Have I ever found fault with Thy Providence? At Thy command I have been poor, but I was content. It was Thy pleasure that I should reach no high office, and I have been satisfied. Have I not ever come to Thee with a cheerful countenance? It is now Thy will that I depart from the ranks of men. And I give Thee thanks that Thou hast permitted me to live in the world and see all Thy works, and to comprehend Thy Kingdom. Take back again all, for it has all come from Thee."

A dear friend gave me a copy the other day of Nicholas Mae's immortal painting, "An Old Woman Saying Grace." What an ugly old crone she is at first sight! ragged, thin, haggard, her face wrinkled and channelled like the trunk of some venerable elm tree. But as you look closer, the beauty begins to come out. You see the sacrifice, the heroism, the strength, the spirituality, till soon the face really wears a charm. No Madonna is half so beautiful as real motherhood. "Do it beautifully," says the heroine in Ibsen's drama as she urges her paramour to suicide. But can we do a bad act beautifully? Is not suicide

essentially ugly? The teaching of Christianity is that all sin is inherently repulsive. Nothing is beautiful in the spiritual order but life and love. Does the world criticise your creed? Show them your Christ. Show them His life in your own life. He is fairer than the morning; He is the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. Live with Him and you will love Him. It is related of that brilliant French woman—Madame de Circourt—who once reigned in Paris society, that she was so homely when a girl that her mother said to her one day: "My child, you are too ugly for any one to ever fall in love with you." It sank down deep into her heart. She retired to her room and began to weep. She got down on her knees and said: "O Lord, I know I am ugly; I cannot be pretty, but I can be good; come into my heart and make me pure and true." The result was that she became a most consecrated Christian. She so gave herself to the spirit of unselfishness that she became the idol of Paris. Madame Guyon was a beautiful woman, but when smallpox seized her it stole away her charm. And instead of

a beautiful face, she gave to the world a beautiful life. And we can all give that, can we not?

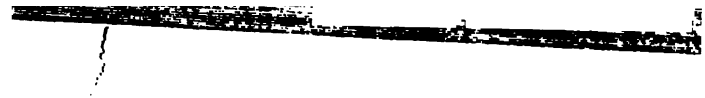
"Beautiful lives are those that bless—
Silent rivers of helpfulness
Whose hidden fountains few may guess.

"Beautiful hands are those that do
Work that is earnest, brave, and true,
Moment by moment, the long day through.

"Beautiful eyes are those that show—
Like crystal panes where hearth-fires glow—
Beautiful thoughts that burn below.

"Beautiful lips are those whose words
Leap from the heart like songs of birds,
Yet whose utterance wisdom girds.

"Beautiful twilight at set of sun;
Beautiful goal with race well run;
Beautiful rest with work well done."



TRUST AND PEACE

CHAPTER VII

TRUST AND PEACE

"Consider the ravens."—Luke 12:24.

WHY the raven? Why not the eagle or the ostrich or the pelican or the stork? The raven is a bird of ill omen. The Law of Moses condemned it as unclean. It is also a superstitious bird. I mean, it is associated with superstition. It is black and weird and funereal. It is supposed to bring bad luck and to forebode death. It has a hoarse, grating voice—croaking, raucous—not a bit like the meadow lark. It is carnivorous; it is a thief; it is rapacious, greedy, voracious. It has given us our word "ravenous." The eagle will fight for its prey, but the raven waits till it dies; it prefers death and putrefaction. Surely, then, it is a somewhat strange thing, is it not, that the Master should incline our meditations to the raven. Why did He not say, consider the

blue-jay or the gold-finch with their brilliant plumage, or the lark and the lapwing with their rapid flight; or why did He not say, consider the thrush or the starling with their sweet song? These, by the way, are all Bible birds.

The raven, furthermore, is a very cruel bird. It forces its own young out of the nest, and compels it to find its food or starve. There is quite a little in the Bible about God caring for the young raven. The Psalmist says, "He giveth to the beast his food and to the young ravens when they cry." Then, too, it is a very solitary bird. You hardly ever see more than one or two at a time. Crows go in flocks, but one never sees a flock of ravens. It is a lonely creature. No other bird seems to care for it. So it is not at all an attractive game. Poe calls it that "grim, ungainly, gaunt and ominous bird of yore."

"Prophet, said I, thing of evil,
Prophet still, if bird or devil,
Whether tempter sent or tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate, yet all undaunted,
On this desert land enchanted,

On this home by horror haunted,
Tell me truly, I implore,
Is there, is there balm in Gilead?
Tell me truly, I implore.
Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'"

Now, after all this disagreeable recital, let us read the text again. "Consider the ravens. For they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn. And God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls!" Cannot we learn the gracious lesson? If God cares for a raven, will He not care for a child? If He clothes the grass of the field, think you He is going to leave His little ones naked?

The question of God's caring for us is life's greatest inquiry. I only know of one other question as important: "If a man die, shall he live again?" Men and women, with hunger and yearning in their hearts, are asking it every day. There comes a time when we all ask it. We cannot help asking it. Does God care? Is He interested? Let us take a little observing pilgrimage out into the fields of nature, and see if we cannot find some hints to

help us by way of answer to this puzzling question.

And to begin with, it must be confessed that He does not seem to care very much about our bodies. One cannot look out upon the world without seeing at a glance where our age puts the emphasis. The concern of the average man is for his body. The policy of the average life is to pile up possessions. The physical is the substantial. The goal is to enjoy the present order of things. Success is rated in terms of the material and the welfare of the outer man. That is why, when some horrible catastrophe comes, so many have their faith shaken and ask: "How can God be good?" But is it not a very elementary question? To be sure, if the body is the important thing, the reasoning is valid. If life is a school for the culture of the carnal, then the cruel wars and famines and forces of nature are impossible of any Christian solution. How can a good God let one hundred men die in a coal mine? He cannot, if when the earthly house of their tabernacle be dissolved they have no other building. And so I hold that

no man can rise to a faith which no eruption can shake until he learns the subordination of the body; that what God is labouring for is not the body but the soul. The whole teaching of Jesus is the preciousness of the higher life. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where thieves do not break through nor steal."

Here is this frightful war, with its unspeakable horror, and the good have not enjoyed any special immunity. How can it be made to conform to the teaching of a loving Father? I know of but one possible method of adjustment. P. P. Bliss, the hymnist, penned the lines:

> "I know not what awaits me;
> God kindly veils my eyes,"

and then went out to be killed in a railway plunge. If we could communicate with him this morning, I think he would say: "My mutilated body was not I; it was only the temporary vesture of my spirit and no harm came

to that." We look about us and everywhere is suffering. But suffering is not the sad thing. The sad thing is sin. Paul says, "I glory in my sufferings." Paul rejoiced that he was permitted to suffer. He counted it a privilege. As a rule people do not lose their faith when they see men sinning. It is only when they see them suffering that their religion is staggered, when all the time Jesus is teaching us that sometimes it ought to be counted a privilege to suffer.

Sixty years ago seven men went out to Terra del Fuego to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the degraded inhabitants of Picton Island. All were men of simple piety. When they reached their destination the natives were hostile, and forbade them to disembark. So they sought shelter in a neighbouring bay. Meanwhile the storms crippled one of their two boats, and the ice tore their nets, and soon their stores became exhausted; they were compelled to subsist on limpets and wild celery. Then, before the winter was over, scurvy broke out, and this coupled with hunger carried off all seven—Allen Gardner, the captain, being

the last survivor of the gallant band. A ship touching at that island the following year found their bodies near the entrance to a cave. And close by was the diary which Gardner had kept. At the entrance to the cave was written in red paint these words: "My soul, trust thou still upon God." And the last words he wrote, as for weeks he slowly starved to death, are these: "I know not how to thank my God for His marvellous loving kindness." Ah, you say, was it not cruel for God to let His servants perish on that friendless island? That depends. If the body is the main thing, yes. But if the soul is the important thing, not necessarily. It is a greater work to enable a servant of the Lord to play the man in hunger than to feed this mortal body. Mrs. William Booth was one of the saintliest women that ever crossed the footlights of this world. She was one of the rare gifts of God to the Nineteenth Century. She was one of the aristocrats of the Kingdom. But she passed to her rest a martyr to one of the most painful diseases to which human flesh is heir.

So the lesson we need to learn is to correct

our estimates. If the grave be a period, and this life all, then the management of things does oftentimes seem cruel. But let us mount up to the Bible point of view. "Consider the ravens." Consider means literally "along with the stars." Get up into the heavenly places. Look down on these streets from a lofty altitude. We are not here for bodily development; we are here for soul discipline. This body is not I; it is only my house.

"This body is my house—it is not I;
Herein I sojourn till, in some far sky,
I lease a fairer dwelling built to last
Till all the carpentry of time is past.
When from my high place viewing this lone star,
What shall I care where these poor timbers are?
What though the crumbling walls turn dust and loam—
I shall have left them for a larger home!
What though the rafters break, the stanchions rot,
When earth has dwindled to a glimmering spot!
When thou, clay cottage, fallest, I'll immerse
My long-cramped spirit in the universe.
Through uncomputed silences of space
I shall yearn upward to the leaning Face.
The ancient heavens will roll aside for me,
As Moses monarch'd the dividing sea.
This body is my house—it is not I;
Triumphant in this faith I live, and die."

And He does not seem to care much either about our ambitions. Some of our anxieties do not worry Him greatly. "Why take ye thought for food and raiment?" We pray for worldly advantage and are denied it, and then we think that God is indifferent. We pray for position and feel rebellious and sore if it is not granted us. But has God ever really promised to reward us with houses and lands for being good? There surely is but one answer. He does not care whether we have a "pile" of money or not. Indeed, I am rather inclined to believe that He would prefer us not to have it. We must learn to value what He values. Most of our worries are about things that He considers non-essential. The petty things fret and annoy; the great things calm and refresh. The secret of all our difficulty is that we do not always know what is best. Some one has said that God does not answer a great many of our prayers because He is so good. Can you not look back on your own life and see that the very trouble you experienced, and railed against at the time, was the very thing you needed? You

called it a misfortune when really it was a boon.

It is not, Whom the Lord loveth He pleasureth, but, "Whom the Lord loveth He scourgeth." It is one of the mysteries of His ways of working that good men sometimes fail, saints oftentimes suffer. A very tragic chapter could be written on the failure of the saints. "It is good for me," said the Psalmist, "that I have been afflicted." Let the soul in sorrow lie still and wait. By and by we will know better. "Tribulation worketh steadfastness and steadfastness approvedness and approvedness hope." Every thwarting hath its appointed ministry. Failure is a stern teacher, but she teaches some blessed lessons. Strength is found in battling with the difficult. "We learn geology," says Emerson, "the morning after earthquakes." God always rewards us with the best. The reward of goodness is not gilt-edge investments. The reward of goodness is more goodness. The reward of purity is more purity. God has not promised to pay us in dollars and cents for being good. If that were so, everybody would be good. We

are to be good for its own sake. We are to be good for Christ's sake. "The sun may not always be shining in the sky, but we can always have it shining in the soul."

What God cares about is our souls. Open the Bible at random, and almost on every page is found the teaching that God cares for us. He cares intensely. He cares individually. His care is personal. "Are not five sparrows sold for two pence, and yet not one of them is forgotten." It needs no divine revelation to teach us that God is great. That is written across the sky; the heavens declare it. What Jesus came to teach was that God is little; that His love is infinitely minute. A poor, ignorant farmer was returning from church when a sceptic accosted him.

"And where have you been this morning, John?"

"I've been to church, sir."

"And what have you been to church for?"

"I've been to church to worship God."

"Is He a great God or a little God?"

"He is so great that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, and He is so little that

He has taken up His abode in my heart. I live in Him, He lives in me."

That was the answer of a philosopher. The glory of Christianity is that God dwells in the human heart. The vision of the eternal glory appals us and we withdraw from it in fear and trembling, but let us see this same eternal glory standing and knocking outside the fast-closed door and we say:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly."

"Consider the raven" then, dear friend. The raven lives a long time. Sometimes it lives one hundred years. But God cares for it. And He will care for you, too, if you will just let Him. Christ saw the wonder in the common bird. He felt the wonder of the common heart. "Be anxious for nothing," writes the Apostle to the Philippians. "Casting all your anxieties upon Him," adds Peter. Life is an ocean voyage. We have nothing whatsoever to do with the choosing of the ship, nor the making of the weather, nor the time

of sailing, nor the picking of the crew. The only thing we choose is the cargo and how we are going to handle the craft. So let us trim our sails and watch our bearings, and be sure to keep our prow toward port. Let us make use of the best seamanship we know. That is our part. Be not torn hither and thither. Be not of doubtful mind, unsettled and tossed about like boats adrift on the billow. Be not creatures of perplexity and suspense. Be not distracted about to-morrow. Sufficient unto each morrow are its own distractions.

And how sad it is! What a sorry sight is a worrying Christian. A worrying Christian drives away the little children. There is nothing balmy or ambrosial or sweet about him to attract young, hopeful hearts. He lacks the precious aroma. He is sour himself and everything he touches turns sour. Birds and lilies never murmur. That is one reason why we love them. The path to Christian composure is the path of Faith. God has joined together in one inseparable connexion trust and peace. "Be anxious, then, for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication,

with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God," and His peace shall keep you from all undue agitation and fill you with His own eternal calm.

FAITH AND FEARLESSNESS

CHAPTER VIII

FAITH AND FEARLESSNESS*

"Herod feared John."—Mark 6:20.

AND it is a fair question to ask why. Why should Herod fear John? Outwardly there seemed no reason in the world why Herod should fear John. It would seem much more reasonable to read that John feared Herod. For Herod belonged to an illustrious family. He was the son of Herod the Great. Indeed, he was great himself, as the world reckons greatness. He was tetrarch of Galilee. He was a very rich man, and like his father lavished large sums of money on public institutions. He lived in regal magnificence. He reigned three and forty years. He even went to Rome to see if he could not secure the title of king. He was a successful administrator and diplomat. Soldiers stood armed at every

* Sermon to the New England Society.

exit of his palace, on tiptoe to do his will. He was one of the judges before whom our Lord appeared at His trial. Surely he was a man to be consulted and regarded.

And John! Who, pray, was John? Why, John was a poor man. He was what the world would call a nobody. He grew up in solitude. He had no friends, no influence, no pull. His dress and his diet were of Spartan stuff. He founded no order. He wrote no book. His popularity was that of a morning-glory. He was simply a wild wilderness preacher. I am tempted to call him the first Puritan. He was in prison, shackled, at the time to which these words refer, and the headsman was at the door with the axe. Yet, notwithstanding all this, the record goes on to inform us that "Herod feared John."

"John, than which man a greater or a sadder
Not till this day has been of women born;
John, like some lonely peak by the Creator
Fired with the red glow of the rushing morn."

Now, I would like to look with you, if I may, into the roots of this *courage* and this *timidity*. What is the explanation of it? Why should

Herod fear John? Let us see if we can find some answer to this seemingly unwarranted disposition.

It has been noted how every nationality has its own peculiar trait. The Irishman is witty, the Britisher is slow; the German mind is dreamy, the Welsh mind is religious; the Slavic type is heavy, the Latin is mercurial, the Mexican is lazy, the Yankee is shrewd. The Scotchman who went to hear an Episcopal service, where they had a splendid organ, came away saying: "It's a' verra bonnie, but it's an awfu' way of spending the Sabbath." He touched the stern, strict Scottish heart.

Judaism is no exception to this rule, and John the Baptist was a Jew. And I think, if we look into his Jewish blood and his Jewish training, we will understand a little the secret of the man's unflinching fortitude. Trainers of wild animals tell us that the elephant is afraid of a mouse. Grotesque as it may seem, this great mountain of beef shrinks from a mouse. The insignificance of the little thing, and its tantalizing gyroscopes, baffle his conception of warfare. But John the Baptist was

no insignificant man. We do not know what he looked like, but tradition says he was a big, stalwart fellow. So does Art. Donatello and Titian depict him as a giant. There was fire in his eye and thunder in his voice. His tread is that of a conqueror. I can see him striding across the desert like one of the old Norse gods. He hits out right and left. He has no beautiful phrases. His periods are not the periods of Edward Everett. In every sinew and ligament are written, *"this is a man of power."* With his gaunt, big-boned, burly form wrapped in a coat of camel's hair and bound with a leathern girdle, his dark eyes flashing from behind those shaggy brows, his voice rumbling like artillery down the Jordan, he was not a man to be trifled with.

But after all, this cannot be the secret. The secret must be a good deal deeper than this. The physical in its last analysis is always a minor matter. Some of the biggest men have been far from being the bravest. John Knox was a little, frail, delicate man. His power was not the power of avoirdupois. It was a hidden thing. It was the power of the old

Hebrew prophets. I think, unquestionably, the secret of John the Baptist's dauntless daring was that he was a man of God. I mean by that, he believed in God—in a personal God; in a living God. He knew himself to be the spokesman of the Almighty. The glory of the Hebrew people was their faith in the authority and sovereignty of Jehovah, the one living and true God. Indeed, it was more than a faith with them; it was a passion.

Now it has often been noted how the story of the Puritanism of New England is largely the story of ancient Israel. Its laws were Hebraic. There was the same sense of Jehovah's sovereign control. New England was patterned on the model of the Old Testament. The whole impulse of the Mayflower movement was religious. It was the logical outcome of that insurrection of the human conscience which we call the Reformation. That which conscience demands, no power—political or imperial—can ever withhold. The will may be bent, the heart may be broken, but the moral sense of mankind is irrepressible. Whatever these people forgot, one thing they never for-

got: they never forgot God. They did not start out to make money as the end of life, but to serve God; to "join themselves into a church in the fellowship of the gospel." They put eternity above time. Their aim was not to swim comfortably through existence for a few brief years, but to seek God, to hear His voice, to win His favour; to lay hold on the things that are abiding. Their religion was not an emergency-brake, or an insurance against accident. It was a living, every-day communication with God.

There is no man in history more intensely religious than John Winthrop, the first Governor of Massachusetts. The story of his spiritual life is one of the choice passages on the page of English Christianity. And he carried over here the spirit of that faith which represented the purest and the best life of the old land. Of course there were men among them false and unworthy. That is true of every circle when it grows to any considerable dimensions; but I speak of the great majority who suffered for their principles in these dark days, and I repeat that the characteristic note

of Puritan piety was its consciousness of God. It was not a piety of holy places or sacred rituals, but a personal affair. It was something that each man transacted alone. It was a covenant between spirit and Spirit. That is what made these men resolute and fearless. Loss of home and liberty was nothing. The voice of God to the soul was the commanding thing. For this they lived. For this they laboured. For this they suffered. For this they died.

I had the privilege of being present at the time of the inauguration of President Lowell as President of Harvard. It was certainly an illustrious occasion. It seemed as if all the scholars in America were present. And I think the thing that thrilled us all the most was the singing of the 78th Psalm. Think of it! That psalm was composed several thousand years ago. Its theme is the presence of God and the continuance of His covenant with His people. The boys sang "Fair Harvard," but the old Hebrew psalm was far more thrilling. It was a song of Jehovah and His wonderful doings among the children of men.

They tell me it has always been sung at Harvard on state occasions ever since its founding in 1636. The Puritan fathers sang it in the early days of our Republic, and now the Puritan sons sing it too. The founders of Harvard College believed in God; and so did the founders of Yale, and so did the founders of Princeton and all the other Puritan schools of learning.

We are living in trying times these days—days trying to faith. Many are losing their grip on God. They are saying: "Where is now thy God?" "Why standest Thou afar off?" To many, the Star of Hope has become dimmed. The smoke of shot and shell has well nigh blotted it out. There is a sigh of despair in the air. Look at Belgium, for instance: a little country, absolutely innocent, minding her own affairs, almost wiped out of existence; her houses in ruins, her cities laid waste, her people fugitives; one long trail of blood smeared across her hills. No shabbier piece of military iniquity ever disgraced the black page of war. I don't suppose there are many avowed atheists in the world, but what

can we call the *ethics of the jungle* but atheism? What is militarism, after all, but atheism? It is the old delusion, is it not, that the greatness of a nation depends on its destructive equipment. If we are living as if God were not, what is that but atheism? If my God is a *juggernaut* god, what is that but atheism? "God is on the side of the big battalions"—what is that but atheism? If Goliath is king, what is that but atheism? Tolstoi said, a few months before he died—and it was the utterance of a prophet: "The modern world has temporarily lost God, and without Him it cannot live."

Personally I am not discouraged, because I believe that God is soon to show Himself. The sword of flesh is fast cutting its own throat. God is just biding His time. And when He comes forth, it will be a better world. "The whole creation groaneth in pain," but then, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory of the age that is coming—the gospel age; the age of the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness; the age when war will be no

more, when this festering open sore of the world will be healed.

Now, if we have this faith in God firmly fixed in our minds as the secret of the greatness of these people, I think it explains a good many other things about them, as well as about the old Baptist prophet. Let us just glance at two or three of these in closing.

I. I think it explains, first of all, their *Courage.* They certainly were men of courage. Theirs was a courage that has never been questioned. There was no enemy whom they feared if they were sure that the God of Israel was on their side. They were "the only men who dared to strike at the Duke of Alva and resist the tyranny of Philip." And it was not the courage of the flesh, I repeat. It was the courage of a superb faith—a courage which no persecution could shake. And no persecution could shake it because they believed that the eternal God was their refuge, and that underneath them were the everlasting arms. Nothing makes a man so strong as to feel that he's in the right—that God is on his side; or rather, as Lincoln put it, that *"he's*

on God's side." When a man believes in God and fears God, as a rule he fears nobody else. And that, I repeat again, was the courage of these Pilgrims far away. They could burst out into the brave lines of Henley, handicapped as he was by sickness all his life long:

> "I thank whatever gods there be
> For my unconquerable soul."

Then it explains another thing. It explains their *conscience*. We hear a good deal to-day about the Puritan conscience. What is the Puritan conscience? Why, the Puritan conscience was simply a vision of God. They saw that the throne was white, and so they despised everything that was not white. "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord high and lifted up, and His glory filled the temple." That was the vision that thrilled their hearts and dazzled their eyes. They despised *hypocrisy* and *falsehood* and *sham* because they were men of tremendous convictions. They did not live rubber lives. They heard God speak, and that voice was final. They had no tricks. They did not know how to flatter or to bribe

or to compromise. They were mighty haters. A mighty hater makes a mighty lover. Hating is the other side of loving. We cannot love truth aright until we hate wrong. And these men hated wrong. They were unflinching, outspoken men; men with a bull dog bite —you must cut off the head to loosen the teeth.

They believed that the day of the Lord was sacred. They believed that law ought to be reverenced. And they were conscientious in their political duties as well as in their religious duties because they felt that "the powers that be are ordained of God." So they were always ready to battle for their country and its freedom. They were men of God, but they carried a sword and a flint-lock. They were willing to fight, but they would never fight for a cause that was unjust. They planted the Republic on the rock of a national conscience.

Then it explains another thing. It explains *their seeming severity.* Let us make no mistake about it. These men were not perfect men. They were not saints. They believed in

God, but we must all be ready to confess that He was a severe God. "I knew Thee that Thou art a hard master, reaping where Thou hast not sown." That, let us be free to admit, was too largely their theology.

God is like man in that He has a reputation as well as a character. God's character is what He is; His reputation is what men think He is. Unfortunately these have not always been the same. Experience teaches us that there are many men of many minds concerning God. In fact, history tells the story of one great theologian once saying to another in the heat of a public debate: "Your God, sir, is my Devil." *Alas, the glass through which we see the Father is blurred so often by our own breath!*

Dr. Marcus Dods once remarked that all wrongness of conduct is at bottom based on a wrong view of God. If we think that God is relentless and unyielding, it will make us relentless and unyielding. No man is better than his God. Very few men are as good. The river cannot rise higher than its source. And the trouble with these old fathers was

their interpretation of the Eternal One. He was the Old Testament Jehovah. He was not always the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. They wanted to do the right. Their heart was in the right place, but they were overstern to the tender and the lovable. Their creed was rugged and bleak, like that first New England winter. Their God was hard, but then they were called upon to do hard things. Life with us is a good deal more tolerant and cheerful to-day. Indeed, there are some wise men who think that we have swung a little over-far to the other pole, and that the greatest weakness of the Church of Christ to-day is the loss of her Puritan spirit. Some years ago an article was written on Puritanism under the title of "The Hard Church." And a great divine took up the gauntlet and preached a sermon on what he called "The Perils of the Soft Church." He meant the easy church, the liberal church, the languorous church. I am not so sure that it isn't fraught with full as much danger. Some one has said that what we need most in the State to-day is *the moral equivalent of war.*

Is that not true of the Church? Archbishop Benson once made a remark something like this: "We are hearing a great deal to-day about High Churchmen and Broad Churchmen, but I am convinced," he went on, "that what we need most is Deep Churchmen." Aye, that is the trouble with the Church to-day. She is not deep enough. She lacks the sacrifice, the reality, the loyalty of the old Pilgrim spirit.

And then it explains one thing more. It explains the *artless simplicity* of these people. They were democratic and simple in their tastes because their standards were not material. They had no fondness for the social entanglements that are so vexing *us*. They did not look *without* for their fulfilment. They looked *within*. Their ideal was the simplicity that is in Christ. They were real folks. They did not pretend.

It is just here that they have suffered most at the hands of their critics. The Puritan is laughed at in society. He has been called fanatical—sanctimonious. He has been the butt of invective and ridicule. He has been

put in the pillory and flogged. It is quite touching to hear John Robinson tell his people before they start that they are well weaned from the delicate milk of the motherland—and some one adds, "sour milk." But I believe that if there ever was a time when society needed an infusion of some Puritan blood it is to-day. We need to recover something of their temper. We are domineered too tyrannically by the sordid things. With our luxury and frivolity and extravagance and ostentation and vulgarity and sensuality, we are losing the very essentials of greatness. The roar of the market has swept into the sanctuary and the home. I lived for a number of years in a fashionable tourist town, and many an evening have I gone out to walk through the corridors of the great hotels and watch the faces of the gay world. All were in search of happiness; and I used to remark that the one thing lacking was the very thing they were seeking. Cheeks lined with care could be noted on every side; eyes with a vacant, worried look; very few with a calm, restful serenity. What is the cause of the anarchy and the I. W. W.'s in our

land to-day? It is largely, is it not, the arrogance of the rich? The old notion that the extravagance of the well-to-do helps the poor by giving them employment, I claim, is a false ideal. It is false because it is selfish. It is the old doctrine of Mandeville that private vices are public blessings. There must surely be a slip in the reasoning somewhere. If waste is a good thing, then we will need to revise a good many of our valuations. War, for instance!

"Now, Dives daily feasted and was gorgeously arrayed,
Not at all because he lived it, but because 'twas good for trade;
That the people might have calico, he clothed himself in silk,
And surfeited himself with cream that they might have more milk.
And e'en to show his sympathy with the deserving poor,
He did no useful work himself that they might do the more."

I was reading the other day the report of a memorable dinner in London more than fifty years ago. The dinner was given by Christopher Neville to some of the leaders of Eng-

lish thought—leaders in politics, literature, science, art, and religion. After the dinner there was a series of what we Americans call "after dinner speeches." Dean Stanley was asked to preside. There were no set addresses; no topic assigned. Everything was extempore. The dean arose and proposed for discussion the question: "Who will dominate the future?" He called upon Professor Huxley to speak first. The professor got up, and after a little skirmishing he gave it as his opinion that the future will be dominated by the nation that sticks most closely to the facts. The report goes on to say that he left his audience profoundly impressed. After a moment of silence, the dean again arose and called upon Edward Miall. Edward Miall, by the way, was an English journalist who was also a member of Parliament and President of the Royal Commission on Education. Beginning quietly, he went on to say: "Gentlemen, I have been listening to the last speaker with profound interest, and I agree with him. I believe the future will belong to the nation that sticks to the facts, but I want to add one word

—*'all the facts.'* Not some of them; all of them. Now, the greatest fact of history," he went on, "is God."

The guests at that dinner have all vanished, but the question they discussed is with us still; yes, with us in an aggravated form. These are dark days, but they are not any darker than many another day the world has seen. I used to love to look out upon the mountains in my California home when the air was clear. And when the fog fell down and hid them, I never doubted they were there. I *knew* they were there because for years I had feasted my eyes on them. Shall we doubt God because for a season He has hidden His face? Have we not seen Him?

"God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle line;
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine.
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget."

RELIGION AND SIMPLICITY

CHAPTER IX

RELIGION AND SIMPLICITY

"I fear lest your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."—II Cor. 11:3.

In the nature of the case religion must be a very simple thing, because it is intended for all sorts of people. It is not meant solely for scholars or philosophers or theological professors. It is meant for every child of Adam, and not all of Adam's children are clever. A lot of us are not clever. Some of us cannot read Greek—not even New Testament Greek. I have a coloured cook in my home. She has been in our family for more than thirty years. She can neither read nor write, but she can sing, "My Faith Looks Up to Thee." You ought to hear her crooning, "My Jesus, I Love Thee!" It is possible to love the Lord and not be able to answer one single question in the Heidelberg Catechism.

It is possible to love the Lord and yet not be able to read even the Bible.

We have been reading a great deal during the past few years about "the simple life," but this does not mean the rudimentary life. Simplicity is not synonymous with crudeness. It is a rule in mechanics; the simpler the better, but that does not imply going back to Gurney stage-coaches and Chinese wheelbarrows. The simplicity of life is in putting emphasis on the things that really matter. Montaigne says: "We do not buy a horse for his rich bridle, but for his strength and sureness of foot. We do not buy a greyhound for his fine collar. Why, then, do we not value a man for his real manhood? He has a great train, a beautiful home, a long title, but these are not the man; these are only the accidentals, the regimentals. Man has a right to be judged by what he is, not by what he wears." The world is never going to tear down its homes and dress itself in skins and take to the tepee. Making life simple does not mean making it meagre—not any more than making sentences intricate means making them profound. Mr. Chester-

ton, in his volume on Bernard Shaw, says that the world owes thanks to Mr. Shaw for having popularised philosophy. He says: "We have passed the age of the demagogue—the man who has little to say and says it loud. We have come to the age of the mystagogue—the man who has nothing to say and says it in big words." "And Mr. Shaw," he goes on, "deserves our gratitude for having slain the polysyllable." Abraham Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg registers the high water mark of American utterance, and it is as simple as childhood.

How simple Jesus is! He never startles us with any high-faluting rhetoric. He does not say "justification," "adoption," "predestination," "transubstantiation." His words are "light," "life," "joy," "trust," "hope," "peace," "rest." He says: "I am the bread of life." Every word is monosyllabic. He nowhere calls Himself the dessert of life; the salad or the seasoning, rendering things tasty. He nowhere calls Himself the wine of life, or the liquor of life. He is not a stimulant; He is a staple. He is a fundamental—bread,

meat, flesh, food. We may get the flavourings of the table otherwhere, but the essence of the festival is Himself. He is the bread of which if a man eat he shall never hunger; the water of which if a man drink he shall never thirst. Again He says: "I am the door." Now, of course, if the door has a Yale lock and I must fumble about to find the keyhole; if it is like the door of a safe and needs a certain combination to open it, then there is not much hope for me. I am not an adept at manipulating numbers. But if all I have to do is to knock —well, a blind man can knock; a child can knock; an idiot can knock. One does not need to memorise the Epistle to the Ephesians to be able to knock. "Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

There is a story told of the late Bishop Westcott. One day he had been preaching before the University of Cambridge. It was a very profound discourse. Two professors were returning together from the service. One of them said to the other: "Well, what did you think of the Bishop's message this morning?" "I was just thinking," the other made

answer, "that Christianity must be a good deal simpler thing than that." This is how some of us often feel when reading certain books. I have just been threading my way through a great volume on the Atonement. The argument is so closely woven, and so obscure, that sometimes it would seem as if only a trained exegete could follow it. When we bear in mind that the story of the Cross is to be preached to every nation under heaven (aye, and to every creature), the thought that forces itself upon our minds is that all technical entanglement in the pulpit is out of place and untimely. An intricate faith, in such a world as ours, is self-condemned. It was Moody, was it not, who once said to a certain preacher: "Put the Gospel where the lambs can nibble at it, and where the calves can get a bite. Most of you fellows put it so high that only the giraffes can reach it."

When the Great Teacher lived on this earth, He did not confine Himself to Nicodemus and Gamaliel and Joseph of Arimathea. He did not mingle exclusively with the scribes and lawyers and scholars of the Sanhedrim. Con-

trariwise, His followers were mostly farmers and fishermen. He moved among the common people. "The common people heard Him gladly." "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes."

Now, of course, this is not saying that there are no difficulties in the Bible. Because that is not true. There are difficulties. There are great difficulties. There are twists and skeins that cannot be unravelled by the human mind. The Bible is just full of difficulties, but not so with religion. There are no real difficulties in religion. Religion, remember, is not a knowledge of the Bible. Religion is a knowledge of God. The reason for a good deal of our perplexity is that we are everlastingly confusing religion with two things.

We are always confusing it, first of all, with theology. If you study the history of the Church, you will find a constant tendency to state religion in a theological way. If we had the time, some of us could speak along this line from sorrowful experience. What hours

I have spent myself over the doctrine of predestination, for instance! But I have lived long enough to know that it is not essential to understand predestination to follow Jesus. I remember, when uniting with the Church, memorising the Shorter Catechism. I remember the answer given to the question: "What is repentance unto life?" "Repentance unto life is a saving grace whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it unto God with full purpose of and endeavour after new obedience." And I remember going out into the fields and trying to square the analysis of my own timid heart with the analysis of this unsparing answer. It is an unspeakable pity, is it not, that so often we confuse the faculty that apprehends unseen truths with the truths themselves?

I remember another time going into the office of a great merchant and sitting in his chair for half an hour during the busiest part of the day waiting for him to come. He is one of the big wholesale merchants in Chicago.

And as I sat there, the thing that impressed me most was: what gibberish it all was to me. I could not understand the phraseology. It was "negotiable instruments" and "ad valorems" and "consols" and "fractional currencies." And is not this a good deal the way many feel when reading the historic creeds of the Church? But let us keep insisting that theology is not religion. Theology is the analysis of religion. It analyses faith and divides it up into several parts—historical faith, doctrinal faith, scientific faith, saving faith. It analyses repentance and shows us quite an assortment there, too. It analyses the atonement and again another variety. Theology is the science of religion, just as botany is the science of flowers; just as astronomy is the science of the stars. Some of us love flowers, but we know nothing about botany. We love to watch the stars, but it is possible we do not know the name of one of them.

"I cannot tell why silvery Mars
Moves thro' the heavens at night;
I cannot reason why the stars
Adorn yon vault with light.

But what sublimity I see
Upon the mount, the hill, the lea;
It brings, my Lord, a thought of Thee."

The other confusion is liturgical. Religion is confounded with ritual. Perhaps as good an illustration as any is the Lord's Supper. It is not a difficult thing to picture in one's imagination the first Lord's Supper. Twelve men are sitting round a table in an upper room. No doubt it was a very humble room, and very humble appointments. There was no parti-coloured pageantry. I do not suppose there was even a table-cloth. The One sitting at the head of the table breaks the bread and passes it around, saying: "Take this in remembrance of me." They all partake, sing a hymn, and then pass quietly out. Now, let us trace our steps to some great Roman Cathedral. It was once my privilege to attend a communion at St. Peter's in Rome. High mass was being celebrated. Possibly fifty priests and bishops of the church were present. The service was all in Latin. The dignitary who officiated first put on one robe and then another. He must have changed his canonicals at least twenty

times during the hour. Acolytes carried his train. Candles were lighted and blown out and then lighted again. The air was choked with the odour of incense. The crucifixes and rosaries and relics and reliquaries and censers and holy water all contributed to the bewildering nature of the service, and the thought that kept forcing itself was: what a gulf between all this elaborate display and that simple meal in the upper room. This is not intended to be a harsh criticism of a sacred institution. It is simply the attempt to show that religion is not ritual; that every procedure that piles up a little mountain of symbol in front of the Cross is the sworn enemy of simplicity. It is Christ alone who saves, and beside Him there is no other Saviour.

What, then, is religion? Men have made it magical and mystical and vague and nebulous and altogether a very complex, cryptic thing, but there is no reason why it should be made dark with types and figures or hidden in antiquated words. God hath joined together religion and simplicity.

Religion, first of all, is faith. Not a faith,

mark, but just faith. And the Bible interprets faith for us. It is defined in one place only in the New Testament: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1.) It is the substance of things hoped for. Substance means reality. It is the reality, or better still the realisation, of things hoped for. Faith is something that makes real what we hope for. Then, it is the evidence of things not seen. And the word evidence, you will recall, is translated proof by the Revisers, meaning literally a conviction that will stand of itself. It is the proof of things unseen. It makes the unseen seen, the invisible visible. It is spiritual sight. When the mind looks through the eye, we see tables, pews, chairs, windows, faces, but when the soul looks through the eye we see God. The Christian who has faith looks into the face of Jesus Christ and says: "I can see my Father." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." It is spiritual recognition. Nowhere in the Bible is faith opposed to reason, but always to sight. It is not the assurance of things unreasonable, but of things unseen.

It is the upward look and holy venture o soul that believes when it cannot see. "Mo endured as seeing Him who is invisibl Faith is:

> "The desire of the moth for the star,
> Of the night for the morrow;
> The devotion to something afar
> From the sphere of our sorrow."

I believe, with a great living divine, that there is not a church on earth in which a man may not find God. God may be found on the sea; He may be found in the forest; He may be found on the mountain top. He may be found in a heathen temple. He may be found even in a saloon—not a very likely place to find Him, to be sure, but, then, Jerry McCauley found Him there. God does not live in a name. Whenever a man is led to stretch out the hand of faith in the dark to the Lord Jesus Christ—that man has found God. It is not a quality in Him, but a quality in us toward Him. It is an attitude of single-mindedness. "I fear lest your minds be corrupted," the Apostle says, "from the simplicity that is *toward* Christ."

Then, religion is hope; not a hope, but just hope. "We are saved by hope," the Good Book says. It says almost nothing about a hope, but it says a great deal about hope. Hope brings strength; it brings comfort; it brings joy. When we come to the Saviour, we do not come for scientific attainments. We do not expect Him to instruct us in chemistry or biology or dynamics. We come for instruction in the nature of God; we come for mercy, for forgiveness, for help, for assurance, for peace of conscience, for joy in the Holy Ghost, for the hope of glory. Somebody wrote a book once on the consolations of philosophy, but there's precious little consolation in philosophy. And a wise observer has noted that the little there is it takes a philosopher to understand. People used to tell the time of day by sun dials. The trouble was that the dial depended for its usefulness on the shining of the sun. When a cloudy day came, the dial was of no value. And when trouble comes, philosophy is helpless. The secretary of one of our missionary boards said recently: "We have thousands of volunteers who are all ready

to leave home and go into any corner of the globe to preach the gospel of the blessed God, but I have no record of any one who has offered voluntarily to go to the dark world of heathenism and proclaim to them a Godless, Christless, hopeless philosophy."

And then, once more, religion is love. And as before, not a certain kind of love, but just love. There is but one kind of real, genuine love. "We love because He first loved us." It is the love that lights its torch at the great altar above. Religion is a deep, earnest friendship with the man of Galilee. If we love Him, we will love everybody. A scribe once came to Jesus with a question: "Which is the great commandment of the law?" And Jesus answered: "Thou shalt love." If without faith it is impossible to please God, surely also we can say that without love it is impossible to please Him, for religion is pleasing God. And pleasing God is loving, for "God is love." I may be able to argue theology with a professor of polemics: what is the good of that if the torch of love is not burning in my heart? I may be as orthodox, well, John Wesley says,

"as the devil," but of what avail is that if I do not know how to love?

Religion, then, is a very simple thing. Let us not try to make it obscure. It used to be supposed that gold ore must be very deep down in the heart of the mountain. So miners often missed the precious metal by getting below it. But to-day we are told that the most valuable finds are oftentimes near the surface. And just so of the precious veins of saving truth. They are not infrequently near the surface. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "The life is more than meat," says Jesus. What life? Why, the spiritual life, of course. We can only attain unto the simplicity of Christ by being rooted in the spirituality of Christ. And we can only be rooted in the spirituality of Christ by cultivating day by day His pure and sweet and gracious friendship.

Do you recall these lines of the Kansas poet?

"In a very humble cot,
In a rather quiet spot,
In the suds and in the soap,
Worked a woman full of hope;

Working, singing, all alone,
In a sort of undertone,
'With a Saviour for a friend,
He will keep me to the end.'

"Sometimes happening along,
I had heard the semi-song,
And I often used to smile,
More in sympathy than guile;
But I never said a word
In regard to what I heard,
As she sang about her Friend
Who would keep her to the end.

"Not in sorrow nor in glee
Working all day long was she,
As her children, three or four,
Played around her on the floor;
But in monotones the song
She was humming all day long,
'With the Saviour for a friend,
He will keep me to the end.'

"It's a song I do not sing,
For I scarce believe a thing
Of the stories that are told
Of the miracles of old;
But I know that her belief
Is the anodyne of grief,
And will always be a friend
That will keep her to the end.

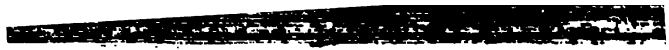
"Just a trifle lonesome she,
Just as poor as poor could be,
But her spirits always rose,
Like the bubbles in the clothes,
And though widowed and alone,
Cheered her with the monotone,
Of a Saviour and a Friend
Who would keep her to the end.

"I have seen her rub and scrub,
On the washboard in the tub,
While the baby sopped in suds,
Rolled and tumbled in the duds;
Or was paddling in the pools,
With old scissors stuck in spools;
She still humming of her Friend
Who would keep her to the end.

"Human hopes and human creeds
Have their root in human needs;
And I would not wish to strip
From that washerwoman's lip
Any song that she can sing,
Any hope that songs can bring;
For the woman has a Friend
Who will keep her to the end."

And after all, that's what the Christian religion is.

FIDELITY AND REWARD



CHAPTER X

FIDELITY AND REWARD

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."—Gal. 6:9.

"LET us not be weary." The Greek word for *weary* is used in four other places in the New Testament, and in all of the four it is translated "faint." II Cor. 4:16—"Wherefore we faint not." II Cor. 4:1—"As we have received mercy, we faint not." Ephesians 3:13—"I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you." Luke 19:1—"Men ought always to pray and not to faint."

Furthermore, the word rendered "faint" in the last clause of our text is used by the Master, in Mark 8:3, to denote physical exhaustion: *"And if I send them away fasting to their own homes, they will faint by the way."* So that the meaning of the passage would seem to be this: "Let us not be faint-hearted

and discouraged in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire and give out and fall by the wayside." Let us not lose spirit; let us not lose hope. It is a great call to courage and patience and Christian optimism.

Then, again, there is another word: Be not weary in well doing, or more correctly, beautiful doing. *"Kalos"*; beautiful. Let us not get faint doing beautiful things. Of course the verse cannot mean physical fatigue. For we all get physically tired doing even *beautiful* things. I have read that Spurgeon often went home from his church, after speaking to 6,000 people, a physical wreck. I heard a minister say once that he could preach three times a day, and in addition conduct a Bible Class, and return in the evening "fresh as a bud on a rosebush." But one is tempted to doubt if there was much real beauty about his work, for the beauty of the bud is the life of the bud. Beautiful work is sacrificial work, and that means arterial action. No human being can shed blood and not get tired. So the passage, I repeat, means spiritual depres-

sion. Be not so weary as to waver. Be not so weary as to give up. Let not thy heart grow weary. Work heartily done is beautifully done and will be rewarded.

And still once more by way of clearance, and in order to a perfect understanding of the passage, let us note another word: "We shall *reap.*" Reap! The figure is *agricultural.* Are you a farmer's boy? If so, you understand the metaphor. Let us not get discouraged stumping and rooting and extirpating, and eradicating and gathering and burning, and ploughing and scuffling and harrowing, and pulverising and tearing up—let us not get discouraged with all these things. They are all necessary. They are all ordained. They are all beautiful, for in due season we shall reap if we are patient.

Such being our interpretation of the text, then, let us now pass on to a few practical lessons by way of tonic and stimulus. For people do get discouraged. Christians get discouraged. We all get discouraged. And we get discouraged for several reasons. Let us recall a few of these reasons by way of

suggestion. We become discouraged, first of all, because so much of our work is preliminary. It is preparatory. So much of it seems to be purely academic. Oftentimes we do not see any fruit from our toil. We see no results. We seem to be doing nothing but turning up the furrow. So much of the time is spent in getting ready. Look at the situation as it presents itself. Let us, for a moment, turn our steps backward to the beginnings of things. Come to the forest primeval. See that pioneer, axe in hand, going out into the pathless wilderness. What a formidable work is his! What a will of steel he must have! What a lion-hearted man he must be! Great oaks and hemlocks must be hewn down. Shrubs and saplings and boulders and bushes must be cleared away. Stumps must be uprooted, logs removed, fens drained. The work is rough and slavish and radical and destructive. It is a call to heroism and tenacity of purpose. "The crooked places must be made straight and the rough places plain." The task is bleak and wintry and inhospitable and lonely and oftentimes intimidating. Then, when spring comes

around the soil must be broken. The sward must be cut by the colter and torn up by the tooth of the hoe and the harrow. Then, after weeks have passed the sower comes along. "Behold a sower goes forth to sow."

Well, the same great law obtains in the spiritual order. Much of our work is preparatory, too. We are just plain farmers, and our work is discouraging and wearisome and toilsome because we are simply farmers. There is very little poetry and glitter and glamour about a farmer's life. Adoniram Judson laboured for six years in India before he cut a single sheaf. Carey toiled seven years before his heart was gladdened by one convert. Tyler, in South Africa, saw twelve summers pass before the first Zulu accepted Christ. James Gilmour was a lonely pioneer among the nomads of Mongolia. After he had been labouring among these people for four years, he writes these words: "In the shape of converts, I have seen no result. I have not, as far as I am aware, seen any one who even wanted to be a Christian." Three years later the question came up as to whether it was

really worth while to wear his life out in such a sterile field; but on the principle of: *"Sow beside all waters* and thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that," he stuck to his post like the hero that he was. It was in 1885, fifteen years after he reached the southern frontier of Siberia, that *Boyinto, his first Mongolian convert,* was received into the church. Will you let me read to you how he describes the thrilling events? He had visited a mud hut. "The priest I had come to visit was busy lighting a fire, which would do nothing but smoke, and the room was soon full. Finding him alone, I told him that I had come to speak to him and my other friends about the salvation of their souls, and was pressing him to accept Christ when a layman entered. Without waiting for me to say anything the priest related the drift of our conversation to the layman, who, tongs in hand, was trying to make the fire blaze. Blaze it would not, but sent forth an increasing volume of smoke, and the layman (invisible to me in the dense cloud, though only about two yards away) spoke up and said that for months he had been a scholar

of Jesus, and that if the priest would join him they would become Christians together. Whether the priest would join him or not, his mind was made up; he would trust the Saviour. By this time the cloud had settled down lower still. I was lying flat on the platform, and the two men were crouching on the floor. I could just see dimly the bottom of their skin coats, but the place was beautiful to me as the gate of heaven, and the words of the confession of Christ from out the cloud of smoke were inspiriting to me as if they had been spoken by an angel from out of a cloud of glory."

And the same has been true of hundreds of sowers in the field of humanity. "I see exceeding small fruit of my ministry," wrote Samuel Rutherford to Lady Kenmure. "If the great mass of inertia would only move; if it would only give but half an inch—but it won't."

The sower is always a lonely man. He goes forth usually alone. He does not march to the music of sprightly and jubilant gladness. John Williams was a lonely man in Erromanga. Robert Morrison was a lonely man

in China. David Livingstone must often have been an extremely lonely man in Africa. When John G. Paton buried his wife and baby out in the South Seas, with not a Christian face to cheer him, he must have been an indescribably lonely man. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises." They were pioneers, pathfinders, forerunners, voices in the wilderness.

Then we get discouraged because of the monotony of our work. Monotony always tends to tire. Routine rusts the body and the mind; aye, and the soul as well. Walk for an hour and you feel refreshed; stand still for the same time and you are exhausted. The Psalmist says: "Because they have no changes, they fear not God." That is to say, when men live a life of even and undisturbed serenity, the tendency is toward materialism. The discipline of change plays quite a considerable part in our spiritual development. There is no beauty in a single colour; there is no music in a single note. A workman said recently: "I hate my work, and I am not ashamed to hate it. My work, day in and day out, month

in and month out, year in and year out, is seeing that a machine bores a hole in a piece of steel. The steel and the hole are always just alike. I hate my work, and I do it only because I have nothing else and I must do it. I would gladly throw it up, if I could." Can anything more dull and humdrum be conceived than the labour of a poor girl I saw last week, whose work, from seven in the morning till five in the afternoon, day in and day out, is sticking pins in a piece of paper? Adam Smith tells us that in the making of a pin about twenty workers are required. One cuts the wire, one draws it out, one does the pointing, one the polishing. Once the shoemaker made a boot, but now he feeds a machine with a piece of leather which simply goes to make the heel of a boot, or the strap, or the vamp. Once the watchmaker made a watch, but now he simply sharpens some little cog. "My work is never done," says the house-maid. "It is cooking and washing and sweeping and scrubbing all the time." Here are stokers down in the bowels of a great ocean liner. Nothing but shoveling coal! The great red throat of

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the furnace is always hungry. Pile on coal and in fifteen minutes pile on more. What a hot, heavy, hopeless task it is! A man said to me once: "You did not put much enthusiasm into your sermon this morning." *"I know it,"* I replied. *"I know it well.* I have been working on that sermon for two weeks, and I almost hated to preach it. I have gone over it so often in my study that it has become stale and dry and flat and lifeless. It has lost all its sparkle." It is the monotony of sermon-making.

Now, what is the cardinal error in all this criticism of the sameness of things? Well, the cardinal error is this: if the highest aim of that housemaid is to get her work done, it will very soon become dreary and she will likely grow discouraged. If the one ambition of the stoker is simply to shovel more coal on, he will soon get tired of his job. If writing sermons is the ultimate of my life, I will in time get spiritually weary. But this is not the Christian conception. The Christian conception is that we are not making things. We are making men. We are making ourselves. The most

important thing you and I have to make is not a living but a life. We are sowing seed, and the most important grains are the ones we are scattering in our own souls. It is a monotonous task to spend 300 days in the year fixing up a paper of pins, but if we put patience and thoroughness and sympathy and courage and kindness and good honest toil into the task, we are dropping eternal truths into the soil of our own hearts, and great will be the harvest. And the Apostle's call to us is to live on the spiritual side of our work. Even humdrum and drudgery have a spiritual aspect. "Whatsoever ye do, whether in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Life, after all, is only a great culture for the growing of a character, and the tools we use are not the important thing; the land we are clearing is not the important thing, nor is the straightness and evenness of the furrow: the important thing is the grains we are sowing. The important thing in a game of chess is not the board we are using, nor the men we are moving. I once saw a game of chess played on a board of solid gold, and with knights and

pawns and castles of solid ivory, but the gold and the ivory were of small matter; the only thing that mattered was the game the contestants put up. The victor in the Olympic games was crowned with a laurel wreath, but it was the power to win that he prized—not the wreath. The wreath was of no value except for what it symbolised. And the real victor in the play of life is not the man who amasses most money, nor he who checkmates most opponents, but he who has most "beautiful doings" to his credit.

The longer I live the more I am coming to feel that what we call our work is really our play. We are very apt to think that our biggest work is done in the shop, in the store, in the factory, on the farm, but may it not be that our really important work is done in the humbler places? How we treat our friends! How we conduct ourselves before our children! How we endure head-winds and hardship and some of the other things that are perhaps even more perilous, such as sunshine and good fortune and the favouring breezes! Our real work is character building. The business in

which we are engaged is only incidental except as it ministers to that. Carey said: "My mission is to preach the Gospel; I cobble shoes to pay expenses." I gave a few pennies to a poor fellow the other day. He said he was hungry and in need. "You were very foolish," said my friend who was with me, "the man is a fraud; I could see it on his face; watch him—he will go straight to the saloon; your kindness is thrown away." I replied: "Do you think kindness is ever thrown away?" Money, I know, is often thrown away, but can it be that kindness ever is? Is not the happiness we give away the only happiness we have in life? Are not the things we lose, if we lose them unselfishly, the very things we keep? When the little girl waters the garden, does she not also water her own heart; and is any plot as well worth irrigating? What flowers can grow there! We think sometimes that we are here to do this particular work. But not so. God can raise up others to do my work a great deal better than I can ever do it. We are here to cultivate ourselves, and to raise up a crop of fruit in our own hearts. Fruit is what the

great Gardener is looking for. It is not as important to me that I should preach in such a way as to bring others to Christ, as that every sermon I write should bring me nearer to Him myself. In a few years it will not matter a particle whether we ruled an army, or a dynasty, or a colliery, or a kitchen, or a place for making pins, but it will matter eternally whether or not we ruled our own spirits. I would not be one bit surprised if it should turn out some day that the most important part of our lives was not our thoughts, nor our deeds, nor our sacrifices, but our prayers.

There is an exquisite little touch in the original which our English version does not give. The Greek word for "weary" is from the root *Kakon,* which means badness; and the Greek word for "well doing" is from the root *Kalon,* which means beautiful. Kakon and kalon. Let not your kalon become kakon. Let not your goodness become badness. Let not your beauty degenerate. It is a warning against the danger of backsliding and growing cold. And the Apostle includes himself in the exhortation in a delightful way. "Let *us*

not lose our fervour," he says. Let us not lose our enthusiasm and become faint-hearted. Let us not deteriorate. Let us not go back from these beautiful heights to the level of our baser selves. Let us not decline as Ephesus has done, which left her first love; or as Pergamos did, or Thyatira, or Laodicea. It is one of the perils of the spiritual life. We are all apt to lose the fresh zest and charm and glow of our early religious experience. I have known young Christians to lose their shining faces and to let them become cobwebbed and dust-covered. The morning freshness faded into the light of common day. The monotony of our work is apt to dull the enjoyment of it. The danger even of church-going may become a real danger, because the very regularity of the habit may tend to make it a formal thing. Sir James Paget claims that most of our bodily diseases start in sheer fatigue. Jesus Himself apologised for His disciples when He said: "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." And so it is that Christians oftentimes get cold and lose their relish. "You have begun in the Spirit," the Apostle says, "now do not end in

the flesh." Contrariwise, rather, "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us press on unto perfection."

And then, once more we grow discouraged because we become impatient. Nothing is more needed in our work than patience. Pioneering, at best, is not an inspiring task. Nothing will keep a pioneer from losing grip but his prophetic instinct. He is labouring for a goal that is out of sight. How impatient men are to-day! They want their fortune in a hurry. There is an inordinate passion for *quick returns.* It is the fever of the speculative world. It is the haste to be rich. We think that growth is a matter of dropping a nickel in a slot. We expect the harvest to come the day after we sow the seed. And when it does not come, we lose heart. We imagine we are *fairies,* when the fact is we are *farmers.* We cry: "Come Lord Jesus; come quickly," and when He does not instantly appear, we lose faith in His promise.

But everybody knows that a field of barley cannot be forced. The husbandman must wait. The artist can hurry *his* work, but not the gar-

dener. Five hundred years or so was the great Cathedral of Cologne in building, but the architects of our own St. John the Divine are hopeful of completing their great monument in fifty years. The Campanile of St. Mark was begun in 900 and finished in 1131—231 years—but our Metropolitan Tower was capped and crowned in less than five years. How wonderful the conduit of Nero! Ten years it took to construct it, but our own Croton Aqueduct (of about the same mileage) was laid in half that time, and with one-fiftieth the number of workmen. For ten long weeks Columbus pressed on without flinching, fighting head-wind and mutiny; now the same voyage is a simple question of quite a little less than the same number of days. Everywhere but here the story is the same. The world is moving faster. We are living in the electrical age. Speed is the idol of the hour. One machine to-day will do the work that it took 1,000 slaves to do in the Augustan Era. The world is in a furious hurry. But Nature is the same slow old plodder that she was in the days of Cain and Abel. No invention of science, and

no discovery in chemistry, can accelerate the labour of the farmer. It takes as long to grow a vineyard to-day as in the days of Virgil. It is "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

And that is why no Christian should ever lose heart. To lose heart is to lose hope. To lose hope is to lose faith. And to lose faith is a sin. The farmer does not lose heart. He knows that Nature and Nature's God are faithful. Because *"in due season* we shall reap if we faint not." "In due season"—literally, "in God's own time." When, we do not know. It may be here and it may be there, but the promise is absolute. The victory is sure. *"In God's own time."* Beautiful doing is going to be rewarded. "Cast thy bread upon the waters and thou shalt find it after many days." Gilmour, in a letter written shortly before his death, says: "I am becoming more and more impressed with the idea that what is wanted in China is not lightning methods, but good, straight, persistent toil along the old lines."

Never forget the time element, then. "One day is with the Lord as 1,000 years. If you

have any conception of geological time, what a tick of the clock history is! Why, we can only trace human records back a few millenniums. Sir Oliver Lodge says that this earth will probably remain habitable for twenty million years. Well, that is quite a while. Let us be patient. In the old fable, the mustard tree said to the acorn: "What an insignificant thing you are!" "Yes," said the acorn, "but wait!" And the best answer that a Christian can make is: "Wait!" Wait, and wait on, and still wait. "Wait upon the Lord and He shall strengthen thy heart." We read that Kepler, when his great discovery was made, was rejected by the religious world. He made answer: "Be it so. The Almighty waited many thousand years for one man to see what He had made, and I can afford to be patient a few hundred." Great harvests require great time. You cannot make a Cremona in a day. It takes an age to give it mellowness. Violins are like wine—the older they are the better.

Let us, then, go forth in hope. Anyone can count converts, but who can count impressions? No man is going to accomplish much

to-day unless he is an optimist. The Bible is the very embodiment of Hope. Hope is one of its classic words. True, it puts Paradise behind, but it puts another Paradise before. According to the inspired writers, the soul has had no sordid starting point and it has no sordid goal. The best definition of religion is that it is a blessed hope. A hope that reacts in self-purification. "Every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself." It brings this life under the power of a life that is endless. "Life is not a shroud, it is a wedding garment." It is an inextinguishable hope. Christianity is the only religion that is hopeful. Every other faith is hopeless. Buddhism is hopeless. Taoism is hopeless. Confucianism is hopeless. They are all hopeless. Christianity is jubilant. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SATISFACTION

CHAPTER XI

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SATISFACTION

"As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness."—Psalm 17:15.

THIS psalm is a glorious prophecy; a far-sighted, clear-sighted prophecy. It looks not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are unseen. It looks beyond this land of death, beyond the grave, beyond the resurrection, into the city that is eternal.

The Bible tells us very little concerning that city. About all we know is that it is a holy place and that it is a happy place. The details are missing. One of our favourite hymns is a translation by Dr. Neale of an extract from Bernard's great Latin poem:

"Jerusalem, the golden!
With milk and honey blest;
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice oppressed.

I know not, O I know not
What joys await us there;
What radiancy of glory,
What bliss beyond compare."

And that is about the way it stands. We must all confess, "I know not, O I know not." What are we going to be doing in heaven? What kind of a place is it going to be? Will we be engaged in any secular employment? "We know not, O we know not." We know not where it is nor what it is. Not one word has the Master uttered which we can seize as an actual description of the life beyond. We know nothing of the practical workings of that ultimate abode. He did not give us a single hint as to the locality of the heavenly homestead. We have no guide-book to the country, no Baedeker. Of one thing, however, we are sure. We are going to be satisfied. "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake in Thy likeness."

Now I do not suppose for one moment that we are all going to be satisfied with the same things or in the same way. We are not all

satisfied with the same things or in the same way here, and there is no good reason to believe that in this respect heaven is any different from earth. I rather imagine we are each going to retain our individualities when we cross the Great Divide. This is a world of infinite variety. Since the birth of time there have lived many billions of human beings on this earth, and it is a somewhat bewildering thought that no two have ever been known to exactly duplicate each other. No two flowers in the garden were ever found alike, no two leaves on the tree, no two faces on the street. And the faith that keeps pressing itself is, surely the great Creator has not exhausted Himself. He is not bound over yonder any more than he is here to a dull and tame monotony. The future life is not going to be so many millions of copies of a single pattern; that would be wearisome.

We can see this every day all about us. Some people, for instance, are perfectly happy when listening to strains of music. It lifts them up above the world—above its din and clatter and roar—into a temple of peace. But

then, what would Darwin and Spurgeon and men of that stamp do if they were compelled to depend on that for their enjoyment? The music of the glory-land will no doubt be a wondrous source of joy to those who love music, but to the millions like Moody and General Grant who are not musically inclined, it cannot count very largely in the secret of their felicity.

Then, some are perfectly happy only when acquiring knowledge. They consider that day lost in which they have not learned something. They are students. Robert Hall, at 60, began to study Italian in order that he might read Dante. Did not Mr. Gladstone at 80 find his greatest delight in the pages of Bishop Butler? When Mr. Edison was recently asked, "Is the end of electrical invention nearly reached?" his reply was: "There is no end to electrical invention; there is no limit to anything." A great theologian once wrote a book, and the thought he developed was: The joy of studying Astronomy and Geology and Physics and Botany and Chemistry and the secrets of nature throughout the endless ages

of eternity. The book is Dick's "Philosophy of a Future State." (It will be remembered that it was the reading of this book that started David Livingstone on his remarkable career.)

One can have little doubt that such a heaven would appeal strongly to a man of scientific bent—a man like Newton or Humboldt or Hugh Miller, but what a gloomy place such a heaven would be for many of us if that were the only recreation. A theological student once asked Dr. Mark Hopkins what language we should likely speak in heaven. "Hebrew," said the great man. "Ah, then," replied the poor student, who had been racking his brain for months over a Hebrew grammar, "I'm afraid I shall not like it." Heaven will be a fascinating place for the great master-minds, but it will also be a charming place for the little children and the uncultured and the disadvantaged. If you tell your little child that in heaven we are going to be learning all the time, he will very likely dread the place, because each soul wishes to enter not our heaven but its own.

Some people think it almost a profane thing to believe that there will be humour and what we call "a good time" in heaven. I do not feel that way. Heaven is not going to be a dull place. And it surely will be dull if it is to be robbed of everything that is the spice of life. There is, alas, a false piety that would have the Celestial City run on very puritanical lines.

Then, once more, others are only happy when resting. They sigh and pine for rest. Their favourite promise is: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Their favourite hymn is:

> "In the Christian's home in glory
> There remains a land of rest."

They are tired. They remind us of the poor old woman who said that the first thing she was going to do when she got to heaven was to sit down a while and just rest. But heaven cannot be all rest. If heaven be all rest, what of that not inconsiderable company who are happy only in activity; to whom labour is sweet; whose principal joy on earth is the joy

they find in their work? And so we might go on speculating concerning the things we do not know, but let us return to the Psalmist. It is more assuring and confirming to firmly plant our feet and our faith on the things we do know: "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, in Thy likeness."

And the first thought that these words bring to our minds is a sense of present incompleteness but a promise of glorious fulfilment. The Psalmist cries out at the end of his prayer: "I am going to be satisfied." Horatius Bonar takes up the same confidence and expresses it in his hymn:

> "When I shall wake in that fair morn of morns,
> After whose dawning never night returns,
> And with whose glory day eternal burns,
> I shall be satisfied."

We like the word. We like it because it brings out the universal longing of the human heart. Not one of us is satisfied. Who of us is satisfied with what we have? Who of us is satisfied with what we know? Who of us is satisfied with what we are? Perfect satisfac-

tion is something that is not found in this world. How often the mouth is filled with food but not the heart with gladness! The cry of the race is ever for more, but the more never satisfies. The good angel of contentment seems to nestle most frequently in the homes of the poor. One day Lincoln was walking down a street in Springfield with his two boys. The boys were quarrelling over something. A friend stopped him and said: "What's the matter with the boys, Mr. Lincoln?" "Just what's the matter with the world," the great man replied; "I have three walnuts and each boy wants two." How this goes to the very root of all our social unrest! And even when one does get what he wants, it does not bring with it satisfaction. It is like climbing a mountain; there is always a higher peak looming up ahead. It has been noted that there are two sorts of disappointed people in life. There is the man who is disappointed because he does not get what he wants, and there is the man who is disappointed because he does get what he wants. And it is doubtful which disappointment is the keener. When

Max Müller was a mere lad he conceived the ambition of becoming some day a member of the French Academy. For many strenuous years he toiled till at last his ambition was realised, and in one of his letters toward the close of his life he writes these words: "The dream of the reality was better than the reality of the dream."

I think there can be little doubt that much that was once associated with the better land would not be particularly edifying to-day. The heaven of our childhood was associated largely with white robes and harps and angel choirs, until the thought arose that music all the time might get very tiresome even to the disciples of Saint Cecilia. There is a wider vision to-day. We all desire progress; we desire knowledge; we desire the glory of going on. We desire a body not handicapped by infirmity. To the sick, heaven will be health; to the weary, it will be rest; to the prisoner, it will be freedom; to the artist, it will be beauty; to the prodigal, it will be home; to all, it will be exquisite and perfect fulfilment. Beethoven's last words were, "I shall hear in heaven."

"Not here, not here; not where the sparkling waters
Fade into mocking sands as we draw near,
Where in the wilderness each footstep falters—
I shall be satisfied—but oh, not here."

Another thought in these words is the Psalmist's view of death. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake," he says. How false and pagan is our conception of the last great change! "To die," says Peter Pan, "will be a dreadfully big adventure." How few can face it as Charles Kingsley did, who looked forward to it, as he says himself, "with a reverent curiosity." In the New Testament, death is a kind friend who comes and opens the golden gates. God puts his children to sleep and they awake in the presence of their Lord.

A little book was published a few years ago called, "The Great Adventure." It is the story of a child's fear of death and the great victory she subsequently won. A baby sister came to the home, but it only lived a few months; and when it was taken away, the weeping and sorrowing impressed the child greatly. She could not understand where

the baby had gone. When the day for the funeral came and a procession was going in to see the little form, some one led her along and she exclaimed, when she came to the casket: "Oh, there's my little sister in a box." And when they took the box out to the cemetery and put it in a hole in the ground and covered it with clay, she was indeed perplexed. The poor little thing could not understand, and for weeks she brooded over the mystery. But one day she was playing with her balloon and the string broke and her heart was broken, too. Her mother told her that it had gone up to heaven and perhaps her baby sister could play with it, and then she was happy. It was about this time that she made a precious discovery, and it came about this way. One morning her uncle had brought home the branch of a tree with a brown growth on it. He told the child to watch it; that it was a cocoon—and to see what would happen in a few days. It chanced that she was on the spot when the transformation took place, and she gave a gasp when the worm took wings and lighted on the rail of the veranda. It was indeed an illuminating les-

son. She knew now that her little baby sister was not under the ground in that box any more. What was under the ground was only the shell. She herself had flown away. The story goes on to tell how she grew up to be a cheery Christian, and when stricken with a mortal illness, how she was all the while getting ready for what she called "the great adventure." Her sick-room was a bright, sunshiny spot. "Girls," she said to her visitors the night before she embarked; "girls, I want to tell you how I feel about it; I feel tremendously excited. I never dreamed I should be so stirred up about anything, but it does seem so incredible and so splendid that I am actually about to start at last on the great adventure." "You know, girls," she continued, "I shall be off when you come again. I am just going to throw away something that is worn out. But come to-morrow and see Aunt Sophy, and think what a nice trip I am having. My trunk is all packed and the carriage will call in the morning. Think of me as having gone to Europe to study music, or something like that."

The mother says to her child, "Aren't you sleepy, darling?" "Isn't it time to go to bed?" And the little nodding head answers, "No, mama; I'm not sleepy. Please let me finish this." The child is not telling an untruth (in this all children agree); it is merely a difference of definition. But the mother insists, "Yes, dearie, you are sleepy. Come now, kiss papa, and mama will take you upstairs." And the sleepy little head closes the sleepy book and comes and gives papa a sleepy kiss, and off she goes somewhat reluctantly to bed. And the pillow is hardly touched till away she flies into fairyland. And no earthquake could awaken her. But in the morning she opens her eyes, and she is sweet as a breath of clover and fresh as a morning-glory. It is the poetry of death. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake."

And then another thought in these words, and no doubt the most satisfying of all, is that we are going to wear the divine likeness. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, in Thy likeness." We shall see the face of God. We shall see Him as He is. The desire for likeness to God is the one desire in life that is positive of

fulfilment. "Behold, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if he shall be manifested we shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is." Sometimes we are asked if we believe in perfect sanctification. Personally, I always say in answer to that question that I believe in perfect sanctification in this sense: that some day we are going to be changed completely into the likeness of God. We are going to be conformed to the image of His Son. The Church is to be a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. The hope of heaven is a hope of personal holiness. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

This, then, is our idea of heaven: we are going to be satisfied, and we are going to wear the divine likeness. God hath joined these two together. They follow each other as effect follows cause in the economy of His Kingdom. Nothing will ever give real satisfaction but the divine likeness, and given the divine likeness the heart is made glad. And it is to this that

God is leading His children. John Burroughs has a poem called "Waiting," in which he claims that we are going to get everything that we really desire. Sometime, somewhere the soul is going to come to its own. "What is mine shall come to me."

> "I stay my haste, I make delays;
> For what avails this eager pace?
> I stand amid the eternal ways,
> And what is mine shall see my face."

That is to say, all that the heart has ever craved of the true, the beautiful and the good; all that was sweet and precious to us; all that we have ever heartily longed for—all these things we will get when we are really ready for them.

You will recall how Victor Hugo expressed this faith when he was waiting for the end. "I feel," he said, "immortality in myself; I am rising, I know, towards the sky. The earth gives me its generous sap, but Heaven lights me with the reflection of unknown worlds. You say the soul is nothing but the resultant of bodily powers. Why, then, is my soul more

luminous as the bodily powers begin to fail? Winter is on my head, but eternal spring is in my heart. There I breathe at this hour as I did at the age of twenty, the fragrance of lilacs, and violets, and roses. The nearer I approach the end, the plainer I hear around me the immortal symphonies of the world to come. It is marvellous, yet simple. It is a fairy tale, yet a fact. For half a century I have been writing my thoughts in prose and verse; history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode, song—I have tried all. But I feel I have not said a thousandth part of what is in me. When I go down to the grave I shall have ended my day's work. But another day will begin next morning. Life closes in the twilight; it opens with the dawn."

And let me say in closing that I think we can have some of the satisfaction now. Heaven is only the full fruition. I think what the Psalmist means to say is that he will be perfectly satisfied when he awakes in the likeness of his Lord. The advice that is commonly given to young men starting out in life is to make one's fortune first and then—when the

purse is big and ample—we can give to charity. But this is not the Christian ideal. The Christian ideal is to give as you go. The Christian ideal is to begin to live in Heaven now. Let every day find its gracious benevolence. No university one may endow in the after years can bring to the heart one-tenth the joy and happiness that is found in each day's unselfishness. Our finest opportunity is while we are making our wealth, not after we have made it. Now is the accepted time. It is noble to establish an orphanage when we can keep 1,000 orphans, but it is nobler to begin with one and then go on to two and then to three and four. How many start out to amass a pile of money, but in the making lose all power to enjoy it. We should not postpone singing till old age comes. As the moralist said, "Our voice may be cracked then." Let each beautiful morning bring with it its glad and grateful song. We are not to wait till we reach the glory land for our reward in bulk. We can have an earnest of it every day.

I am free to confess that heaven used to be a lonely place to me. There was a time when

I felt about it something like what a great divine describes. He said: "When I was a little fellow my brother died and I was told he went up to heaven, and I thought of a great large room with angels in it and choirs and harps and trumpets, and away off, crowded in a corner, my little brother. Then mother died, and I thought how glad he would be to see her. Then sister died, and there were three up there. And then I grew up and my own child was taken from me, and I thought, 'Why the place is beginning to look like home.'" How often breaking hearts have asked the question, "Shall we know each other there?" I do not see how we are going to be satisfied if we will be strangers to each other.

"When I shall meet with those that I have loved,
Clasp in my arms the dear ones long removed,
And find how faithful Thou to me hast proved,
I shall be satisfied."

There is a story told of Robert Flockhart, the Edinburgh preacher. When he was dying he was heard to say: "Good-bye, Faith, I shall not need you any more, I am going inside to

Sight. Good-bye, Hope, I shall not need you any more, I am going inside to Certainty." And this reminds us of Sir William Russell when he was on his way to the scaffold. He took out his watch and handed it to the physician who waited on him, saying: "Will you please take my time-piece and keep it; I have no more use for time, I am dealing now with eternity."

"There is a land where every pulse is thrilling
With rapture earth's sojourners may not know;
Where heaven's repose the weary heart is stilling,
And peacefully life's time-tossed currents flow.

"Far out of sight, while yet the flesh enfolds us,
Lies a fair country where our hearts abide,
And of its bliss is nought more wondrous told us
Than these few words: 'I shall be satisfied!'

"Satisfied! Satisfied! The spirits yearning
For sweet companionship with kindred minds,
The silent love that here meets no returning,
The inspiration which no language finds—

"Shall they be satisfied? The soul's vague longing,
The aching void which nothing earthly fills—
Oh, what desires upon my soul are thronging,
As I look upward to the heavenly hills!

"Thither my weak and weary feet are tending;
Saviour and Lord, with Thy frail child abide;
Guide me toward home, where, all my wandering ended,
I then shall see Thee, and 'be satisfied.'"

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